

DISINTERESTED LOVE.



1700

1

DISINTERESTED LOVE:
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF
Sir CHARLES ROYSTON,
AND
EMILY LESSLEY:
IN A SERIES OF
LETTERS.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN WILKIE, No. 71, St. Paul's
Church-Yard.

DISINTERESTED LOVE:

BY JOHN MILTON

WITH A HISTORY

OF THE AUTHOR

BY CHARLES ROYALTON



IN THREE VOLUMES

IN A SERIES OF

FIFTEEN PAPER

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LONDON:

Printed for John and William, No. 1, St. Paul's
Church-Yard,

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER CIV.

Mr. BEVERLY to Lord OSSORY:

UNEXPECTED business obliges me to leave Park-hill, and to visit my estate in N——shire. How long I shall be detained there is at present uncertain ; but your Lordship will readily believe, that I shall seize the first opportunity of returning to this beloved spot.

Sir Charles is extremely chagrined at my departure. He proposed accompanying me ; but this I immediately objected to ;

VOL. II.

A

and

L E T T E R S.

and he, with a deep sigh, allowed the impropriety of the request.

The gentle Emily shares in the grief of her beloved Charles, and, by her kind attentions, endeavours to restore his tranquility.

I am to write every week to Sir Charles, and he intends answering my letters with equal exactness—yet I leave him with regret; but I am a woman upon these occasions.

I intend writing to your Lordship upon my arrival in N——shire, and shall with pleasure continue a correspondence so agreeable to my wishes.

My best compliments wait on Lady Offory.

I am, with the greatest respect, your Lordship's obedient servant,

EDWARD BEVERLY.

L E T-

LETTERS.

LETTER CV.

Miss HOWARD to Lady FORTESCUE.

YOUR Ladyship will scarcely believe, that I have, for this last week, been tempted to make love to Mr. Lesley,—and why at this juncture particularly, you say? Why, for the very reason that half the pretty fellows of this age make love—out of idleness—for want of other and *better* employment. Mr. Beverly has left Park-hill; Sir Charles is engaged with his Emily; and my good man and I—what must we do?—But no, I will not be in love neither—I am an avowed enemy to that wicked passion, which has almost robbed me of the heart of my dearest Emily—yet she is offended at my suspicions, and declares that I am more tenderly beloved by her than ever. Can I believe this?

L E T T E R S.

I have been rallying Sir Charles upon the melancholy, which has been visible in his countenance ever since Mr. Beverly's departure.—But Emily took his part with all the eagerness of love, and Sir Charles thanked her by a gentle pressure of the hand.

And how is our sweet friend, your Ladyship asks? why, more blooming and happy than ever—“for her shepherd is kind, and her heart is at ease.”

Mr. Lesley calls me to take a walk with him—I must therefore subscribe myself,

Your Ladyship's

Obedient servant,

CLARISSA HOWARD.

L E T.

L E T T E R S.

L E T T E R C V I .

Miss FREELOVE to Miss SYDNEY.

WHAT, still chiding, Harriet? — why will you not let me manage “*Poor Mr. Elvin as I please?*” the man is delighted with my veracity, and if I do, now and then, go too far, a gracious smile sets all to rights again—ought he not to esteem it a favour, that I will condescend to trifle with him thus? — But as your uncle consents to the attachment, why is the union delayed, you ask? My dear girl, be not hasty; see you not an indecorum in these ready assents, and will my Harriet advise her Charlotte to be guilty of a breach of delicacy? She, that is too easily won, is as easily despised—nothing is valued long, that is hastily obtained; — these are excellent maxims, child: I leave them to your consideration.

And

L E T T E R S.

And so you regret the long visit I have made at Lady Bab Dormer's—what reason can you have for disliking a woman, whom the *beau monde* so highly extol? Is virtue incompatible with grandeur? and must we seek her only in retirement? Virtue is an active quality, and it is in society alone—but how came I to moralize thus—Oh! I forgot to chide you, Harriet, in my last letter—confess that you had been instilling some of your grave advice into the mind of my honoured uncle, previous to his seeing me in town. The old gentleman was very observing, tenacious, and so forth; and had I not called a few tears to my assistance, and promised to be particularly civil and all that to Mr. Elvin, I had assuredly been obliged to have returned with him to the Thorns. And you ought voluntarily to have done this, methinks you answer. Why, child, he has got his favourite Mr. Norton to stay with him, and they play back-gammon, and are so happy! — that my presence would only interrupt their felicity, and you know I hate to be an intruder.

But

L E T T E R S.

But Lady Essex is below—this is an unusual favour. I must therefore receive it accordingly. Adieu! I hasten to attend her Ladyship.

Duty, love, &c. to all the friends of your

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

L E T T E R CVII.

Lord OSSORY to Mr. BEVERLY.

MY dear Beverly, what emotions will this letter occasion you?—intelligence so unexpected.—Ah! could we have foreseen—but it is now, alas! too late—I will hasten to the relation of the event, which has put us all in confusion, and occasioned an universal sadness.

Mrs. Wilmot came yesterday to Windsor. Mr. Wilmot was gone to * * * * * but promised to be with us by dinner, and

we

L E T T E R S.

we accordingly waited for him till near five o'clock, when Mrs. Wilmot imagining that something unexpected had detained him, we went to dinner without him. After tea I withdrew into my library, and left the ladies by themselves. Scarcely was I seated, when Mr. Wilmot's servant entered the room, and, with all the abruptness of vulgar minds who love to alarm, hastily informed me, his master had been thrown from his horse, as he was coming to Windsor, and was carried to a public house, about three miles distant, more dead than alive. As he pronounced these words, Lady Offory came into the library. I acquainted her with the fatal intelligence, and desired her to break it gently to her friend, whilst I hastened to Mr. Wilmot.

As we were going along, the servant told me that he had advised his master not to venture upon that horse, which was a fiery creature belonging to Sir John Mordaunt, but that he was angry at the request, imagining it a reflection upon his skill.

It

L E T T E R S.

It was with difficulty we got Mr. Wilmot to Windsor. He was quite insensible, but frequently attempted to lift his hand up to his stomach. He has voided a great deal of blood. How is Mrs. Wilmot affected? she fainted away when he was first brought into the house.

Poor man! to be called so hastily into a state, for which, I fear, he is entirely unprepared!—unhappy Wilmot! alas! my dear friend, how greatly does it behove us, wretched mortals, whose life is as a vapour which disperseth in a moment, to be constantly prepared for the awful time of our dissolution!

* * * * *

How tender, how amiable is the behaviour of Mrs. Wilmot! “ My dear Henrietta, said she just now to Lady Ossory, what comfort do I derive, at this affecting period, from the reflection of having performed my duty to Mr. Wilmot—how dreadful, where the heart accuses us of neglect,

L E T T E R S.

glect, when no future atonement can be offered!"

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
The post is going away — I must therefore conclude this letter—if Wilmot lives—but that, I fear, is impossible.

Farewel, my dear, dear Beverly; our unhappy Royston—but I cannot bear the reflection—once more farewell.

OSSORY.

L E T T E R C VIII.

Lord OSSORY to Mr. BEVERLY.

ALL hope is fled—Wilmot has just breathed his last in my arms—he expired without a groan—may he be happy!

Write to me immediately, I conjure you, and tell me how I ought to act respecting Sir Charles.

I cannot proceed—I shall impatiently expect your answer. Do you advise and direct your

OSSORY,

L E T T E R S.

L E T T E R CIX.

Miss HOWARD to Lady FORTESCUE.

M R. Lesley will be the bearer of this letter ;—ah ! no ; he will not neither, for the dear man is already equipped for his journey, and I have only now begun to write.—Well—well—it matters not—Emily has written, and the post will convey soon enough this uninteresting chit-chat to your Ladyship. Were it to go now, it would only divert your attention from matters of far greater importance.

And so I am left alone with the lovers—I wish Beverly was here—what charming *tete à tetes* we might have had !

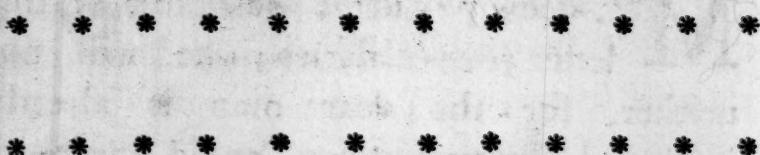
VOL. II.

B

We

2 L E T T E R S.

We have got a new neighbour at Park-hill, one Mrs. Mordaunt, a widow—rich too, they say, and as handsome—as it is necessary for a woman of fortune to be. We have already been twice at her house, and are engaged there to-morrow—she seems quite pleased with our Emily.



Oh ! Madam, what a catastrophe ! what shall we do ? How will the dear Emily support this great, this unexpected trial ? —Mr. Lesley too—that tender parent, can he ever survive the disappointment of his fondest hopes !

Why, ah why was my beloved friend deceived with the expectation of a happiness, which she was never destined to enjoy !—but how I trifle with your Ladyship's impatience—forgive me, dear Madam—

LETTERS.

3

Madam—I hasten to the affecting recital, leaving it to you to acquaint Mr. Lesley with this fatal event, in the manner your judgment shall direct.

We went to Mrs. Mordaunt's yesterday afternoon—hateful visit!—the hours passed away agreeably. Sir Charles was uncommonly cheerful, and the dear Emily, delighted at his vivacity, was herself unusually lively.—Sir Charles played on the harpsichord, Miss Lesley on the guitar, and Mrs. Mordaunt and I accompanied them with our voices.

When our little concert was finished, we begged leave to order Mrs. Mordaunt's coach, (which had conveyed us there.) The orders were scarcely given, when we saw a gentleman riding up the avenue, which leads to the house; and Mrs. Mordaunt running to the window, exclaimed hastily, “Bless me, there is my brother-in-law, Mr. Mordaunt!” “I am glad of it, returned Sir Charles, for he is an old acquaintance of mine—he used to be a good-

B 2

natured,

natured, lively creature!" Mr. Mordaunt entered the room, and having paid his compliments to the ladies, turned to Sir Charles, and clapping him gaily on the shoulder, "what, my old friend Charles Royston! I rejoice to see you—but where have you kept yourself this last century?"—and then before his question could be answered, he entered into conversation with his sister, who chid him for not coming sooner, according to his promise. "You must not blame me, child, returned he; an unexpected event obliged me to postpone my journey—but how now, Royston, proceeded he, turning hastily to Sir Charles, what a deuce keeps you here at this period? art thou inconstant at last? Or is not a rich young widow worth riding after?" "I do not understand you, replied Sir Charles coolly—" "ha! not understand me! why, don't you know that Wilmot is dead?"—"Wilmot dead!" rejoined Sir Charles in a faint voice. "Yes, dead and buried, returned he; it was my being obliged to attend his funeral, that prevented my paying my devoirs sooner to that Lady, bowing to Mrs. Mordaunt."

LETTERS. 5

daunt." Good heaven ! what were my emotions at this discovery ! I cast down my eyes upon the carpet, not daring to look at my Emily ; — at length I ventured to steal a glance at Sir Charles. His countenance spoke the disorder of his soul. He was as pale as death, and I saw him lift his eyes to the ceiling with a look of despair.— The coach came to the door—we got in — I was obliged to support my trembling friend—all was silence—Sir Charles seemed lost in thought, and frequently sighed.

Mr. Beverly's servant was at Mr. Leslie's with a letter from his master. Sir Charles made this a pretence for returning home ; he left us abruptly. I led my Emily into the parlour. She threw herself into a chair, and gave vent to her tears.— At last, starting up hastily, she exclaimed, " Must I then lose him—lose him for ever ? — ah ! tis too, too much. — I sat down by her ; she reclined her head on my shoulder ; we wept together. What a night did we pass ! I did not close my eyes till near five o'clock in the morning. I slept for about an hour, but awoke in the ut-

6 LETTERS.

most terror. I spoke to Emily—nobody answered—I was alarmed—she had left the bed—I arose hastily—she was sitting in her closet. I embraced her tenderly; and she returned my caresses. “ My dear Clarissa, said she, all is now over.—Sir Charles loves me no longer—alas! he never loved me—it was compassion—it was generosity—mortifying reflection! But how weak are these emotions, when opposed to a passion so constant, so tender, as that with which Mrs. Wilmot has inspired him! Ought I then to wish to keep up our present connection?—No.—prudence, delicacy, every thing forbids it—I am determined how to act—the trial requires all my resolution—but heaven, whose aid I have invoked, will not forsake me in this arduous moment—yes, I will force Sir Charles to confess, that your Emily was not undeserving of that tenderness, which it would have been her highest glory to have acquired.

Sir Charles came not till after breakfast. It was unnecessary, when we met, to in-

LETTERS. 7

quire after the health of each other—our countenances spoke for us. Sir Charles said something, however, in a low voice, to Miss Lesley concerning her's ; but she could not answer the enquiry.—Notwithstanding the efforts she had made to assume resolution, against this interesting period, yet all her fortitude forsook her at the sight of Sir Charles, and she burst into a violent flood of tears. How was he affected ! He seized her hand, and pressing it tenderly to his lips, “ My dear Miss Lesley, said he in a low voice, it is, alas ! but too apparent—this fatal event—but forgive me—pity me. I see my folly—my ingratitude—and my future conduct shall atone for.”—“ No, no, Sir Charles, interrupted my noble friend, every flattering hope is banished. We were never designed for each other—the wretched Emily was never destined for such happiness.” “ We must part then, Sir Charles, continued she with a deep sigh,—Mrs. Wilmot is now freed from that fatal engagement, which opposed your felicity—your heart has long been her's—she deserves your tenderness.” Here she stopt

8 LETTERS.

to wipe away the tears that flowed hastily down her lovely face—and then proceeded :

" Whilst it was impossible for you to gain Mrs. Wilmot, I received your addresses with pleasure. The sweetness of your manners, the nobleness of your sentiments, seemed a certain pledge of my happiness. I even dared to hope that my grateful attentions, and unremitted endeavours to discharge my duty, might in time acquire your undivided affection. But heaven has otherwise ordained, and I submit to my fate without repining, since the disappointment of my wishes will insure the felicity of him, who is dearer to me than life." " My dear, my generous Emily, returned Sir Charles in a tone of rapture, how shall I express my gratitude, my admiration ! I confess that I deserved only your reproaches. I was not master of myself at receiving, so suddenly, such unexpected intelligence. It excited in my soul wishes injurious to my honour ; but I will, I have subdued them, and am returned with a determination of being wholly your's."

— " No, Sir Charles, rejoined my truly heroic friend, your wishes are conformable

formable to reason ; Mrs. Wilmot's prior right, her superior merit, demands the preference. " Mr. Wilmot's death has dissolved our connection.— You are free, I repeat it ; I resign all my pretensions to your heart. But, oh ! Sir Charles, if you forget me entirely, I am lost indeed." Her agitations at pronouncing these words were so violent, that she was unable to proceed. Sir Charles endeavoured to vanquish her resolution ; his behaviour was truly noble. How difficult a part had he to act, divided, as he certainly was, between honour and inclination ?— But the generous Emily soon delivered him from his inquietude. " Urge no more a request, my dear Sir Charles, said she tenderly, which I ought not to comply with. I know that, were I now to become your's, I could never enjoy a moment's tranquillity. I should continually reproach myself with having purchased the gratification of my own wishes at the expence of honour—humanity—at the expence of every thing that is dear to a virtuous mind." " But Mr. Lesley, interrupted Sir Charles hastily, what will he say ? He must despise me, and I should have the

10 - L E T T E R S .

cruel mortification to think that I deserved his resentment."—"Ah! fear it not, returned Miss Lesley; he is always guided by reason—he will esteem and love you still. Emily—but I cannot describe the affecting parting—how often did she bid Sir Charles farewell, and how often return again, unable to leave him for ever!" We all wept—we promised an eternal friendship. Sir Charles withdrew—and Emily fainted in my arms. I was unable to console her—I, who felt little less than she did.

This morning, as we were sitting at breakfast, Sir Charles's servant brought a letter for Emily. I inclose a copy of it, with my beloved friend's answer.

"How impossible is it, my dear Miss Lesley, to express the gratitude, the admiration, which your generosity has excited in my soul!—But I should be the most ungrateful being I boast am entitled to worthy

L E T T E R S . 11

worthy of mankind, were I to take advantage of such goodness. Suffer me then, my dear Emily, to continue an attachment, which ought not to be dissolved. The gentleness, the delicacy of your manners, and the numberless perfections, by which you are so eminently distinguished, cannot fail of subduing every illaudable emotion, and of securing my undivided heart. Could I ever hope to experience happiness, when deprived of the sweet consciousness of having acted consistently with honour—with justice! No, no, my excellent friend; I ought to be only your's. No one had ever reason to repent of having performed a duty.

I am, with the utmost respect, gratitude, and affection,

Your devoted humble servant,

CHARLES ROYSTON."

The

The following was my exalted friend's reply.

" Alas, how many tears did it cost her !
But nothing can induce her to swerve from
the strictest rules of duty.

Trust not, my dear friend, to the delusions of fancy ; the excess of your generosity would involve you in eternal repentance. And must I warn you of the impending danger ! I—who am so deeply interested ? Yes, my dear Sir Charles—virtue requires the sacrifice, and I submit to her decrees. Can she who, from selfish considerations, voluntarily deprives another of happiness, have a right to expect a lasting affection ? Were I even desirous of listening to your seducing persuasions, prudence, if not honour, should prevent my compliance.

The blessing I had deprived you of,
viewed through the medium of passion,
would

would appear with greater advantages than it really possessed ; you would behold your poor Emily with disgust, nay, perhaps with hatred.—What ! the tender Emily be hated, and by him she loved so ardently ! Forgive the tear—it would fall.—Let not these suggestions appear improbable ; the heart is frail, my beloved friend, and we are often actuated by emotions we condemn. Urge then no more, too generous Sir Charles, a request which I cannot—I ought not, to comply with. Emily will never be your's ; —yet did she never love you half so tenderly, as at the moment in which she resigned you for ever. Her best wishes, her most ardent prayers, will be continually offered up to heaven for your welfare ; adieu, my beloved friend ; bestow sometimes a thought on her, who will never cease to be, with the utmost tenderness, gratitude, and respect, dear, dear Sir Charles,

Your faithful and obliged friend

and servant,

Emily Lesley.

14 LETTERS.

I will dispatch this letter to your Ladyship, and begin another to-morrow. Emily is writing to Mr. Lesley. She brings me her letter to inclose in mine. Oh Madam, how I pity you! what a painful task have you to perform! Adieu, dear Lady Fortescue. Yours, &c.

CLARISSA HOWARD.

LETTER CX.

Miss Howard to Lady FORTESCUE.

I Have just parted from Sir Charles. He leaves Park-hill to-morrow, and is going to Mr. Beverly's seat in N^oshire, before he returns to London.

My dear friend being engaged this morning in her closet, I sauntered into the adjoining fields, and was deeply ruminating upon the affecting scenes I had lately been witness of, when hearing a rustling behind me,

me, I turned my head and perceived Sir Charles approaching towards me. He eagerly inquired after the health of my beloved Emily, and when I had answered his questions, he expressed, in the warmest terms, the gratitude which her letter had excited in his soul. "But has time made no alteration in her sentiments, rejoined he earnestly? her happiness ought to be my first wish."—"No, Sir Charles, replied I; on the contrary, her resolution appears strengthened by reflection—she will never neglect the performance of her duty, nor revoke a denial so justly given." Sir Charles informed me, that, as that was the case, he should leave Park-hill to-morrow; but that, before his departure, he intended sending a few lines to his friend, Mr. Lesley. I left him with reluctance: he pressed my hand to his lips—I know not what I said—when the mind is softened by affliction, every circumstance makes the deepest impression. We are even affected by incidents, which, at any other period, would have been beheld without emotion.

The

26 LETTERS.

The dear Emily is all impatience for the arrival of her father. She weeps in private, and seeks for opportunities of being alone. I have chid her for concealing her sorrows from the eye of friendship.

I am, with the utmost respect, your Ladyship's affectionate

Humble servant,

CLARISSA HOWARD.

LETTER CXI.

Mr. BEVERLY to Lord OSSORY.

After the contents of my last letter, your Lordship will not wonder when I inform you that our dear Sir Charles arrived here last night. Oh, my Lord, how nobly has Miss Lesley acted! I rejoice that she was able to reject Sir Charles, who, as he was situated, did not—could not, deserve her.

her. This world cannot recompence such virtue—how large a portion of bliss must she inherit in the next!—where her spotless soul will look down on us, who, though admitted (as we will presume to hope) into those heavenly regions, must be contented with a glory, far, very far inferior to her's:

How many questions has Sir Charles asked me, concerning the accounts which I have received respecting Mrs. Wilmot? He is all impatience to see her,—but I have prevailed upon him to remain with me, till the next letters arrive from town. I have talked to him upon decorum, propriety, &c. &c. with all the delicacy of a virgin; but love will not easily submit to the tyrannical restraints of custom. Satisfied with the rectitude of his intentions, he is indifferent to the censures of a misjudging world, which is governed by appearances alone, and often condemns even without conviction.

* * * * *

I this moment received your Lordship's letter. How is Sir Charles chagrined at
Mrs.

18 LETTERS.

Mrs. Wilmot's journey into Essex! — "Miss Sydney, you say, will return with her to town?" — "but when does she return?" says Sir Charles; in a month—or a year? Could not Lord Ossory have guessed near the time at least? how vexatious is this suspense?" See the impatience of lovers.

Sir Charles talks not now of leaving me. I would rally him a little upon this occasion, but his heart is not sufficiently at ease to bear a jest.

I am, with my respectful devoirs to Lady Ossory,

Your Lordship's

Obedient servant,

EDWARD BEVERLY.

LET.

LETTER CXII.

Mrs HOWARD to Lady FORTESCUE.

MR. Lesley arrived here last night. How affecting was the meeting between him and my dearest friend ! He pressed her with rapture to his paternal bosom ; he called her by all the tender epithets of love ; he lavished upon her all those encomiums which she had so justly merited.— “ You are then satisfied with the conduct of your Emily, said she tenderly ? ”— “ Satisfied ! repeated the fond parent, ah, my beloved child ! ”—he could not proceed, and Emily flew into his arms. I joined my tears with theirs— we all wept —yet was the emotion not devoid of pleasure.

Mr. Lesley read to us a letter, which he had received from Sir Charles—it was worthy

20 LETTERS.

thy of him. Emily begged it of her father—she reads and weeps.—My friend was truly affected at your Ladyship's letter; she pressed it tenderly to her lips. “ My dear Clarissa, said she, ought I not to think myself happy, amidst all my sufferings, possessing, as I do, such friends—such a parent!—yet have I dared to murmur against the decrees of heaven.” Ungrateful, presumptuous Emily ! Hast thou not reason to fear, lest the deity, offended at thy unjust complaints, should deprive thee of advantages, of which thou hast proved thyself so unworthy.

“ Alas ! what evils, continued she, might have arisen from my union with Sir Charles, evils, which my fond heart could never have supported !—or supposing my tender wishes had been gratified, and that conception had been productive of that happiness I hoped to experience, have I not reason to fear that my soul, satisfied with its present felicity, might have looked forward with apprehension and regret, with terror rather than joy, to that awful period,

now awfully昭彰的時節 before which

when every earthly tie shall be as nothing ! whereas adversity takes off those gay colourings, with which prosperity decorates the things of this world, and we blush to see upon what transient enjoyments, what trifling pursuits, we have placed our affections, and centered all our wishes.

My uncle peremptorily insists upon my returning to Bath, some time next week. Mr. Lesley and my Emily will accompany me. I see my beloved friend regrets leaving Park-hill ; but her tender father is desirous of her quitting a place, where every object reminds her of her too dear Sir Charles. They intend paying your Ladyship a visit as they return.

I am sorry Sir Edward's journey is postponed to another month—nothing but disappointments, I think, in this world. I am sure I am half sick of it, and am grown as grave as a cat.

I have the honour to be your Ladyship's
Affectionate humble servant,

CLARISSA HOWARD,

LETTER CXIII.

Mr. ELVIN to Lady ESSEX.

MY dear Lady Essex, when am I to have the happiness of seeing you again in town? I lament your partiality for the country, since it deprives me so long of the pleasure of your company.

I would gladly have accepted your invitation to * * * * *, but Lady Dormer would not part with her fair friend; and my Charlotte seemed little inclined to bid adieu to these scenes of gaiety and dissipation. How often have I regretted the intimacy which subsists between them! Would to heaven, Mr. Freelove had influence enough to dissolve the connection! But he is so fond of his niece, and has so little authority over her—and Charlotte has too high an opinion of her own judgment, and too mean an idea of his, to yield to him that obedience

obedience which duty requires of her.—Mr. Freelove would indeed be more amiable, if he was less desirous of being beloved. He, who blindly consents to every sollicitation, betrays either his imprudence or his folly—by gratifying All, he obliges None. No man thinks himself indebted to him, who has not learned resolution to deny even an *improper* request.

You ask a thousand questions concerning Mrs. Wilmot, Sir Charles Royston, Lady Ossory, &c. &c. I must answer only a few of them, and those briefly, as I am going with Lady Bab and Miss Freelove, to the opera this evening, and her Ladyship desired me to be with them before five.

Sir Charles came to town yesterday, but Mrs. Wilmot does not return from Essex till the latter end of this week: so that I cannot yet satisfy your Ladyship's impatience, by an account of a meeting so interesting to you. Neither have I leisure to enter into a discussion of that part of your letter, which relates to my Charlotte. Your Ladyship argues justly, I believe; but what

is

24 L E T T E R S.

is argument to a man in love ! I beseech you then, my dear Sophia, not to torture me any more with a subject so disagreeable.

—Suffer me to continue in a delusion, which is become necessary to my repose. Reason, I fear, is against me ; but love, all-conquering love !—Adieu, my dear sister. The destined hour of attendance is just arrived—a real lover is always punctual—Remember me to my brother.

Your's,

T. ELVIN.

L E T T E R C X I V .

Lord OSSORY to Mr. BEVERLY.

I This moment received your letter. Sir Charles has not then given you the particulars of his late interview with Mrs. Wilmot ? Never, surely, were there two people, who loved each other so tenderly. Yet how did Mrs. Wilmot attempt to conceal a

passion, which, she thinks, ought not to be indulged. Sir Charles is affected, beyond description, at a conduct which arises from her compassion for the amiable Emily. "She has refused you, my dear Sir Charles, says this admirable woman; but her very refusal shews the greatness, the delicacy of her affection. She resigns you without murmuring to the grateful Louisa: she even prays for our happiness—exalted generosity! And shall not we, my beloved friend, endeavour to imitate so bright an example? Ought not the preservation of her tranquillity to be the first consideration of our souls? She has vowed never to become your's. But would she not—ah! she must be far less wretched, if you gave not your hand to another. I shall never be his—would she say—but he refrains from entering into a connection, which would render my passion for him unlawful. I may therefore still think of him—esteem him—love him. What a consolation! She deserves every sacrifice we can offer. Let us not then, my dear Sir Charles, be outdone in generosity." He endeavoured to obviate her

objections—how pathetic is the language of tenderness! Mrs. Wilmot however remained inflexible, and Sir Charles, after having complained of her cruelty, sunk into a dejection, which deeply affected her. She arose, and holding out her lovely hand to him with inexpressible sweetness—“ My dear Sir Charles, said she, I cannot bear to see you thus—doubt not my affection—it is as lively, as tender as ever ; but gratitude, compassion, plead so strongly—however we will now quit a subject, which my present situation renders highly improper.”

I rejoice to find that you are preparing for your journey to town, and that you intend stopping at Claremont in your way to London, as I long to hear how the dear Emily does, and Lady Fortescue can undoubtedly inform you.

Lady Offory desires her best compliments.

I am ever your's,

OSSORY.

LET-

LETTER CXV.

Mr. BEVERLY to Lord OSSORY.

I Arrived at Claremont yesterdy morning. I found here Mr. Lesley, and his amiable daughter. The dear Emily turned pale upon my entering the room. Yet she appears pleased with my company, and joined her intreaties with those of Lady Fortescue and Mr. Lesley, in order to prevail upon me to remain here till the latter end of the week.—Angelic creature! how has she increased the admiration I had before conceived for her! But I will inform your lordship of the particulars of a conversation, which has just passed between us, relative to Sir Charles.—I was walking in the garden, ruminating upon the scenes that had past since my former visit at Claremont, when the appearance of Miss Lesley

C 2 interrupted

interrupted my reverie. I hastened towards her, and we entered into a discourse, which insensibly led us to mention Sir Charles. She inquired after him with the most tender solicitude. I informed her of his interview with Mrs. Wilmot, of her motives for rejecting his addresses, and the dejection which Sir Charles experienced upon this disappointment of his hopes. Emily sighed at the detail, and, after a short pause — “Mrs. Wilmot is truly generous, said she, and my heart is sensible of its obligations to her.—But shall I consent to purchase tranquillity at the expence of Sir Charles’s happiness? — Ah! it is impossible that I can experience any, whilst he is wretched. Let her then no longer oppose Sir Charles’s wishes—their felicity shall be mine. My soul despairs an enjoyment, which is incompatible with virtue. The pleasing consciousness of having performed my duty, has enabled me to support the cruelty of my fate; but if I resign this sweet consolation, from whence can I derive comfort? I have learnt to bear every evil, but that which arises from guilt—
there

there are no other insupportable.—I therefore desire, I intreat Mrs. Wilmot, no longer to reject Sir Charles's addresses. I shall consider her acceptance of them as a favour conferred upon myself!—Good heaven's, Sir Charles to be refused!—Here Mr. Lesley interrupted our conversation; but Emily informed him of what had passed, and he joined, with equal earnestness, in the wishes of his amiable daughter.

I was soon after left alone with him, and he was then more urgent than before. He told me, that he should rejoice to hear of Sir Charles's marriage, as he then hoped his Emily would intirely recover her tranquillity:—“ For, continued the good man, though my child is determined, at all events, never to give her hand to Sir Charles, yet, whilst he continues single, she will unknowingly be influenced by emotions, which must prevent the re-establishment of her peace. But, when he is once united to another, every thing ceases—her tenderness will be no longer indulged as an innocent, far less as a laudable sensation; it will be-

come criminal. She will behold it with shame and regret, and my Emily will not long harbour a sentiment, for which she has cause to blush.

* * * * *

As I have business to transact at Parkhill, which may possibly detain me some days, I intend writing this very evening to Mrs. Wilmot, to inform her of these particulars. I shall also send a few lines to Sir Charles.

My best compliments attend Lady Ossory.

I am your Lordship's

Obedient humble servant,

EDWARD BEVERLY.

LETTER CXVI.

LORD OSSORY TO MR. BEVERLY.

THE generosity of the lovely Emily has cost Mrs. Wilmot many tears ; but the event is answerable to our wishes.

amood

She

L E T T E R S. 31

She has promised to give her hand to Sir Charles, as soon as the laws of decorum will permit, and he is become the happiest of mankind.

My Henrietta partakes, beyond expression, in the felicity of a brother so dear to her, and is again the life of our little circle.

Let not the unfeeling stoic deride the pleasures of this world, and despise a happiness which his gloomy soul is incapable of tasting. It presents many enjoyments, which the eye of reason may behold with approbation.

Lady Ossory enters my apartment—
“ Writing my Lord! and to whom? —
to our Beverly.—Tell him then, that nothing can add to our happiness but the pleasure of his company—tell him also, that our beloved Sir Charles—but you have already described his felicity.”

Adieu, my dear Beverly: our best Compliments attend you ever.

LETTER CXVI.

Miss FREELOVE to Miss SYDNEY.

A Nother escape, Harriet! Fortune favours me beyond expectation. The very week, nay, day, was fixed for my returning to the Thorns, and I was absolutely devoured with chagrin, when Lady Bab's illness retarded my journey, and the physicians having advised her Ladyship to try the Bath waters, my dear, good-natured uncle has consented to my attending her to that enchanting place. Mr. Elvin is to be our escort.—By the bye, Harriet, we have had a most tremendous quarrel, and I should not have forgiven him again so soon, had we not wanted him at this juncture—a lover to contradict his mistress! to dispute her authority! amazing presumption! Yet he is insensible of his fault, and continues grave, nay, sullen.—What proud wretches these men are, my dear! so

averse

averse to owning their transgressions! the creature did not even kiss the lily hand which was extended to him, as a sign of reconciliation—I must not lose him however.

Adieu, my dear. Lady Bab has this moment desired my company.

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LETTER CXVIII.

From the Same.

WE have been at Bath near ten days, and Lady Bab has already recovered her spirits. It is the only place in the world for those who are fond of company and dissipation. Every hour is devoted to pleasure; and health, which is the professed design of the journey, is in general the last thing that is thought of.

For the first day or two after our arrival, her Ladyship saw nobody, except a Miss Howard, a cousin of her's—who, by the way, is a pretty obliging girl, and I believe, with a few of my instructions, would make a figure in the world. Lady Bab has already attempted to ridicule her out of two or three old fashioned notions, which spoil her for a fine lady; but the chit has no ambition to acquire those excellencies, which are necessary to constitute that character.— She glories in her *sensibility*, her *modesty*, and a hundred other awkward qualifications, which are entirely exploded from the beau monde.— She has already interceded for the gentle Elvin; her tender heart is softened by his distress; she wonders at my composure—yet this girl is lively, chatty, and *degagée*. What a pity that such endowments should be attended with emotions, that render all her talents useless!—But company obliges me to bid you adieu for the present.

* * * * *

Oh!

Oh! my dear, such a triumph! your Charlotte has made a conquest, and such a conquest! — None of your commoners, child; but the young, the sprightly, the accomplished Lord Byron.— Elvin—but he is beneath a thought—let him carry his addresses to those, whose beauty and endowments intitle them to look no higher.

But who is this Lord Byron, you ask? Why, my dear, all I know of him is, that he is quite the fashion; that he is just returned from abroad, where he has learned every thing that is necessary to constitute a fine gentleman; and in short—but here he is.—

I am preparing for the ball to-night; Lord Byron is to be my partner for the evening — how Elvin will stare! I expect him here every moment, but he must learn to give place to his superiors.

Poor

36 LETTERS.

Poor Elvin was indeed chagrined. He danced with Miss Howard; but the Lady had no reason to be satisfied with her partner. My Lord and I engaged all his attention; yet he endeavoured to look careless, and even happy. Poor Elvin! he is not half a hypocrite—he was quite rude to Byron, and barely civil to me. “Who is that impertinent fellow?” said my Lord to me.” “Oh! never mind him, returned I carelessly; one cannot satisfy the wishes of every pretender.”

But do you then really intend to discard Mr. Elvin, Charlotte? What will your uncle say to your resolution? How! can my uncle condemn his niece for being prudent? for ennobling her family?—Impossible, child; he will, he must approve my conduct. But is it honourable?—Pho, mere farce and nonsense! We girls of spirit are above being confined by such vulgar notions.

Farewell, my dear Harriet, and expect not to equal me in grandeur, unless you will

will bid adieu to those rigid precepts, which interfere with every pleasure, and prevent every enjoyment.

I am your's,

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LETTER CXIX.

Mr. ELVIN to Lady ESSEX.

YES, my dear sister, I am now but too plainly convinced, that Miss Free-love beholds me with indifference. Would she else treat me with this mortifying neglect for the sake of one, who is known only to be despised, and whose shattered fortune renders the motive of his addresses but too apparent? Shall I then continue to think of such a woman!—Forbid it pride—forbid it every honest, every laudable emotion! No, dear as it will cost me, I am determined to bid adieu to her for ever, unless

less she will promise to relinquish all thoughts of Lord Byron.

I will see her this morning, and insist upon coming to an eclaircissement, which she has hitherto studiously avoided—and why? but that she might still triumph over my weakness! Oh, Lady Essex, had I but followed your advice! But forgive my folly: never, never more shall my fancy mislead my judgment.

Adieu! you shall know the result of my visit by the next post; I cannot write more at present.

T. ELVIN.

LET-

LETTER CXX.

From the Same.

ALL is over, my dear Sophia, and your brother's peace is sacrificed. No, I despise her too much. Ungrateful, perfidious as she is, she expects that I should return to her again no doubt; ah! how greatly is she deceived! I shall remain at Bath on purpose to convince her, that it is possible to be rejected by her, and yet to be happy. I am not unhappy; were I so, I should detest myself, so meanly as she has treated me. Lady Bab desired me not to discontinue my visits; did she imagine, that I would submit to be a witness of my rival's triumph? Can the inconsiderate Charlotte expect, that Mr. Freelove will ever consent to her union with Lord Byron? A title will not induce him to forego every other consideration—but it matters not to me, whether

40 LETTERS.

whether he is successful or no ; my resolution is unalterably fixed.

Farewell, my dear sister, and be assured of the sincerity of my regard.

J. ELVIN.

LETTER CXXI.

Miss FREELOVE to Miss SYDNEY.

WELL, well, my dear, I cannot help it. Lord bless me, must I be subject to all his caprices ? "Discard Lord Byron," and why so pray ? I thought, Harriet, that you had been above listening to the malicious representations of a censorious world ; but I find that I was mistaken. You absolutely write with all the acrimony of an old maid, and against a man who is perfectly unknown to you. Pray, is this consistent with those rules which I always imagined directed your conduct ? "Make

it up with Mr. Elvin—acknowledge your errors—nothing is more amiable than an ingenuous confession of our faults.”—Yes indeed! and be despised ever after by him.—No, no, child, I will never exalt his character by debasing my own. Besides, were I disposed to obey you, it would be impossible, for he has vowed never to speak to me more. But perhaps you would have me introduce the subject, and, with a blushing timidity, implore his attention, whilst I enumerate my transgressions? Methinks, I see him listening, with a scornful superiority, to the self-accusing tale, and slowly avowing his forgiveness, lest the sudden transport should too powerfully affect me. Yet this is the humiliation you were preparing for the poor Charlotte. Thank heaven it is unnecessary.

I am going with Lady Bab, and some other company, to the ball this evening. Lord Byron is uncertain whether he can meet us.—No fear, however, of your Charlotte's not getting a partner, as she is quite the *ton*, and allowed to excel the generality

nerality of her sex as much in wit, as in beauty. But I should not have told you this; you will add the imputation of vanity to the other faults of your bas

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

L E T T E R CXXII.

From the Same.

O H! Harriet, what a mortification! that odious Elvin!—but you will not pity me—yet I must tell you my distress. We were at the ball last night—Miss Howard and some other ladies accompanied us. I was chatting with the former, when Elvin entered the room—what an opportunity for him to have made his peace with me! Lady Bab spoke to him, but he answered her with a cold politeness; yet so devoid was I of malice, that I thought the creature looked handsome, and even perceived graces in his person, which had before escaped my notice.

You

You see, Harriet, I was not like the fox in the fable ; my *fruit* was *sweeter* for being out of reach. He came up to Miss Howard, and though I stood next her, and was, as he heard me tell her just before, disengaged, yet the malicious wretch had the effrontery to solicit her hand for the evening. Oh ! how I wished for Byron's presence ! I was ready to die with vexation. He is lost, that's certain—but who cares ? Jenny taps at the door. “ Miss Howard is below, Madam”—she comes to proclaim her triumph no doubt—to repeat all the soft things that Elvin said to her ; but I will, in that case, mortify her sufficiently : the chit is not used to be complimented, I suppose.

* * * * *

Miss Howard is gone—she did not mention Mr. Elvin—I was ready prepared for her if she had, but did not chuse to begin the subject. She looked uncommonly ill this morning. Do you like black hair, Harriet ? It is my aversion.

Adieu.

CHARLOTTE F REELOVE

LETTER CXXIII.

Miss SYDNEY to Mr. FREELOVE.

THE duty I owe you, Sir, and the interest I take in my Cousin's welfare, will not suffer me to keep you ignorant of an affair, which may be attended with the most disagreeable consequences.

Charlotte has dismissed Mr. Elvin for the sake of a new admirer, Lord Byron ; whose superior rank alone has gained him the preference. His Lordship is personally unknown to me, but I am not unacquainted with his character. Did an exaltation of rank necessarily produce an elevation of sentiment, Charlotte's ambition would be laudable ; but alas ! goodness and greatness are rarely united : such will ever be the case, whilst fortune can command that respect, which is due only to merit.

I have

I have long regretted my cousin's intimacy with Lady Bab Dormer; and to that connection impute many of her errors. Charlotte's volatility renders thought painful to her; she therefore submits to the guidance of those, who are, of all others, the most improper to be her conductors. She has, by this means, been led into mistakes, which she might otherwise have avoided.

I have informed you of my cousin's situation, not doubting but your prudence will extricate her from the dangers which attend it; and I will only add, that if matters cannot be amicably adjusted between her and Mr. Elvin, the sooner she leaves Bath the better.

I am, dear Sir,

Your's most affectionately,

HARRIET SYDNEY.

LET-

LETTER CXXIV.

Mr. FREELOVE to Miss FREELOVE.

If report may be believed, you have acted very indiscreetly, Charlotte. Will you never learn prudence? Did not I settle every thing with Mr. Elvin? Had I not found his fortune beyond my most sanguine expectations? And yet this man is discarded, because he does not happen to be possessed of a title, the only advantage your new admirer has to boast of. Fye upon you, Charlotte! for a girl of sense, you act very foolishly. But you were spoiled by my late sister, and were too much wedded to your caprices when you came under my care, for me to effect any reformation.

Your Cousin Harriet now, what a good child she is! Devoting her time to her worthy grandmother, and indifferent to those idle gewgaws, which constitute all
your

T H I

your happiness. I wish you had profited more from so amiable an example ; but how can one expect amendment from those who are insensible of their errors ? " Who call evil good, and good, evil ? " Who glory in their faults, and place them in the catalogue of their attractions ; I will not say virtues ; the very sound is disagreeable to the delicate ears of a fine lady.

I expect being at Bath in a week, or ten days at farthest ; and shall then endeavour to adjust matters between you and poor Mr. Elvin, who, I doubt not, has suffered much from your unkindness. And remember, Charlotte, that I will have no appeals to the judgment of Lady Bab in matters, where I ought to determine. I like not that friend of your's—but this by the bye.

I am, dear Charlotte

Your affectionate uncle,

ROBERT FREELOVE.

L E T -

LETTER CXCV.

Miss FREELOVE to Mr. FREELOVE.

THREE never was a girl who endeavoured to aggrandize her family, by procuring herself an elevated situation in life, that was treated like your Charlotte. Instead of being applauded for my prudence, I am condemned for want of thought: my care is termed folly; and my ambition, rashness.

My cousin Harriet is proposed as a pattern—I am far from depreciating her merits—but surely your Charlotte—has she ever attracted the attention of the beau monde? Who are her admirers? the Curate of the village perhaps, or some of the neighbouring squires, to whom her notability and prudence (rare accomplishments!) may render her agreeable. But amongst people of taste—you understand me, Sir?

You

You coming to Bath my dear Sir ! amazing !—but your journey will not be attended with the consequences you expect—*poor* Mr. Elvin is pursuing a more yielding damsel. I believe the wretch quarrelled with me, on purpose to have a pretence for withdrawing his addresses.

Miss Howard now engages all his attention ; he dances with her at every public place, and the girl is so happy ! he always liked her, and has frequently praised her, even in my presence, before our last alteration happened.

I am ignorant what report may say of Lord Byron ; for I despise it : but of this I am certain, that every thing which tends to depreciate his character, must be false. He is the politest—gentlest—most enchanting creature you ever beheld. I know he will soon remove every unfavourable impression you may have received of him. The world condemns him, and why ?—because it hates those excellencies it cannot

50 LETTERS.

obtain—by the world I mean, every person of vulgar and contracted ideas.

And so you dislike Lady Bab, my dear Sir? I cannot divine the cause. Her Ladyship attracts universal respect, and I think deserves it;—surely Harriet has not—but I must be silent.

Adieu, dear Sir; depend upon my prudence, and believe me you shall never have reason to regret the confidence you place in

Your

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

P. S. What intolerable weather we have had lately!—it will render travelling very disagreeable—and your gouty disorders—but my care will be suspected.

LET

LETTER CXXVI.

Lady Essex to Lady Ossory.

THE event has happened, which you have so long predicted. My brother is grown weary of an attachment, from which there could be no reasonable expectation of happiness. He looks back with astonishment at the infatuation, which lately possessed him. Where are now the graces that allured his heart! Those lively follies, which once appeared to be adorned with all the poignancy of wit, seem now only the result of unblushing confidence; the ebullitions of a gaiety, which was uninfluenced by restraint—so true it is, that nothing can long charm the mind, which is unsupported by modesty and virtue.

I intend going to Bath next week, so that I shall not yet have the pleasure of embracing you.

D 2

Sir

5² L E T T E R S.

Sir John desires his respectful devoirs to Lord Offory—but he commands me to tell your Ladyship, that he has not forgiven your last *saucy* note to him, and that he shall answer it with the greatest virulence —how will you compromise the affair?

My respects wait upon Lord Offory and Sir Charles.

Yours,

SOPHIA ESSEX.

L E T T E R CXXVII.

Mr. FREELOVE to Miss SYDNEY.

A Fine piece of work Charlotte has made of it!—oh, these girls! I intended, you may be sure, to have been very angry with her upon my arrival; but the artful hussy found means to subdue my resentment, by enumerating

enumerating the advantages, that would attend her present connection, and Lady Bab joining in the same strain, I began to think the girl had acted wisely. However I said nothing, but went the next morning to Lord Byron's, in order to determine what plan I should pursue.

His Lordship, as soon as he heard my name, received me with an inundation of compliments ; yet, notwithstanding all his efforts to conceal it, I discovered a confusion in his countenance, which seemed to be an unfavourable omen. It was some time before he would suffer me to introduce a word, and I began to be tired of this fooley, when a momentary pause happening in the conversation, I mentioned my niece : he hastily interrupted me, and poured forth the most high-flown compliments in her praise ; he declared "that she was the masterpiece of nature, that in her were comprised all the excellencies of her sex, &c." "I doubt not, my Lord, returned I gravely, your affection for my niece, but it is also necessary to think of other particulars.

Her fortune"—“mention it not, interrupted he ; she is herself a treasure, and” — “but a little *cash*, my Lord, rejoined I smiling, will be no *encumbrance*, I suppose.” He coloured ; “as for that, answered he hesitatingly, money, to be sure, is but too necessary—I wish from my soul it were otherwise, for my part—but every thing of that sort can be soon adjusted.” “Not as we proceed, my Lord, returned I hastily.” “I beg your pardon, Sir, rejoined he coolly ; I really did not imagine, that you would enter so soon into a discussion of these points, about which people of rank are generally indifferent. My steward—but I can write to him, indeed.” “I always wish, my Lord, replied I, to be upon a certainty. My Niece’s fortune will amount to 20,000 l.—5000 l. of which will be paid upon the day of her marriage (in case I approve the connection) and 15,000 l. when she comes of age—she is not yet twenty. But if she marries contrary to my wishes, she forfeits all right to the first 5000 l. which comes immediately into my possession.”

I can-

L E T T E R S. 55

I cannot give you his Lordship's answer, it was so incoherent, and delivered in so confused a manner. I was convinced, that the reports concerning him were but too well founded, and that he only paid his addresses to Charlotte, for the sake of that fortune he would have appeared to despise.

Company coming in delivered him from his embarrassment, and I immediately after withdrew. Upon my return I wrote to his Lordship, and forbade his future visits to my niece.

The affair, by some means, became public, and my gentleman was arrested, two days after, for 300 l. by a tradesman who had omitted taking this step sooner, from his having heard that his Lordship was going to be married to a rich heiress. My Lord was so hurt by the affair, that he left Bath the next day.

I have not seen Mr. Elvin yet, as he is absent upon a party of pleasure. We shall remain here some time longer, (as Lord

D 4

Byron

56 LETTERS.

Byron has decamped) for Bath is very agreeable to your cousin, and the poor girl has been sufficiently mortified lately.

I am, with due respects to Lady Sydney,

Your affectionate uncle,

ROBERT FREELOVE.

LETTER CXXVIII.

LADY ESSEX to LADY OSSORY.

UPON our arrival at Bath yesterday, we found my brother just returned from a little excursion. He received us with the most lively pleasure. I was rejoiced to see him look so well, and appear so cheerful.

This morning, as we were sitting at breakfast, the servant entered with Mr. Freelove's

Freelove's compliments, who was below, and desired to speak with Mr. Elvin. My brother ordered the servant to shew him up stairs; yet appeared surprised at the message. For my part, I was horridly chagrined at the mention of that formidable name. "Fear nothing, my dear Sophia, said he (perceiving my agitations) my resolutions are unalterable, because founded upon reason." The old gentleman's entrance prevented his adding more. He received him with the utmost politeness. Sir John withdrew presently after his arrival, and left us to ourselves.

Mr. Freelove, after some hesitation, informed my brother, that he wanted to speak to him in private. "You may be perfectly unreserved before Lady Essex, returned my brother; I have no secrets that I wish to conceal from her; and upon this occasion I particularly desire her presence." Mr. Freelove then told my brother of his surprise and vexation at the conduct of his niece, but said that he hoped it was not too late to procure a reconciliation, as he came

for that purpose to Bath, and had found Miss Freelo^ee sensible of her imprudence, and disposed to make every reasonable concession—adding, that Lord Byron was entirely dismissed. He then expressed, in the warmest terms, his regard for my brother, and the pleasure he shculd have in his alliance. Mr. Elvin thanked him for his civilities, but politely declined his farther interposition. “ That I once tenderly lov^ded Miss Freelo^ee, proceeded he, I need not tell you ; but that time is now over. I could not therefore return to her with honour. She trifled with my heart, whilst it was in her possession ; but it has now recovered its freedom.—I wish her happy, but am certain that it is not in my power to render her so. Our inclinations are widely different—different in essentials. Miss Freelo^ee is fondly attached to pleasure ; my greatest enjoyments arise from retirement. We should each of us be partial to our own pursuits, and behold those of another with a contempt that would frequently appear, and a resentment that could not be always suppressed. The desires of prudence, and

L E T T E R S. 59

the solicitudes of affection, would perhaps be construed into the petulance of caprice, or the haughtiness of command; and I should either be obliged to sacrifice my own inclinations, or to obtain the gratification of them, at the expence of my tranquillity." The old gentleman appeared chagrined at a resolution which he could not condemn, and left us rather abruptly, highly dissatisfied, no doubt, with his visit.

I shall not leave Bath directly, as my brother has requested my stay, and it is a place I was always fond of.

Our united compliments attend your Ladyship, and Lord Offory.

I am,

Your's,

SOPHIA ESSEX.

L E T -

LETTER CXXIX.

Lady FORTESCUE to Miss HOWARD.

I Thank you, my dear Miss Howard, for your obliging congratulations, upon the arrival of Sir Edward; and should much sooner have answered your letter, but for the various avocations which his presence has occasioned.

Mr. Beauchamp, an intimate friend of his, accompanied him from Paris. He is come over with a resolution of seeing every thing in England, that is worthy observation. They set off on their intended tour next week.

I had yesterday a letter from our good friend, Mr. Lesley. Emily, he says, is serious, but not melancholy; and takes pleasure again in those pursuits, which once constituted

L E T T E R S. 61

stituted her greatest happiness. " My beloved child, adds this worthy man, is a proof of the efficacy, the *sufficiency* of religion, to moderate, and even subdue, every temporal affliction."

But Mr. Lesley, my dear Clarissa, is not well. I intend visiting Park-hill in a few days, and shall endeavour to prevail upon him to return with me to Claremont. Change of air may be beneficial to him.

My son desires his respectful compliments.

I remain ever dear Miss Howard's affectionate humble servant,

MARIANNE FORTESCUE.

L E T T

LETTER CXXX.

Lady Essex to Lady Ossory.

I Know my dear Lady Offory will partake with me in the joy which has taken possession of my heart. I will therefore relate the occasion of it, without any further preface.

I was sitting with my brother this morning, in a pick-tooth way—Sir John absent —when the conversation fell insensibly upon love (by the bye he had been very thoughtful for several days.) The subject, you know, is inexhaustible. My brother, however, interrupted me in one of my harangues, by asking me gravely, what I should think of him, if he were to be again enslaved by that passion. “Would you not blame my rashness, continued he, and wonder at my irresolution?” “Not at all, returned

returned I hastily ; the emotion is laudable, where the object is deserving, and I need not fear your chusing improperly." "I am not intitled to such a compliment, rejoined he, though I hope experience has taught me wisdom ; — it is I only, who can in this case be undeferving." — "How ! interrupted I, is it then *really* so ? But the Lady, the Lady, dear brother !" — Can't you guess ? Yes, wrong, I suppose—is she fair or brown—handsome or——give me some hints at least. Well then, she is beautiful without affectation, cheerful without levity, modest without prudery.—Indeed, I know none that deserves these encomiums, except—Miss Howard.—It is she herself.—Then I am happy—why, brother, this is the very girl I had fixed upon for you ; and I wondered, the moment I beheld her, how you could persist in your addresses to the giddy Charlotte, after you had seen that sweet creature. "I always admired Miss Howard, returned he, and wished that Miss Freelo^eve had copied so fair an example ; but since my heart has recovered its liberty, I have been more at leisure

64 LETTERS.

leisure to observe her attractions ; and the engaging manners of the one have appeared so amiable, when contrasted with the airy flights of the other, that I may now perhaps love her with far greater tenderness, than if my inclinations had at first given her the preference."

The post is going away : adieu then, my dearest friend.

Your's, &c.

SOPHIA ESSEX.

LETTER CXXXI.

Miss FREELOVE to Miss SYDNEY.

WHAT do you think, Harriet ?—
Mr. Elvin has absolutely offered himself to Miss Howard, and is accepted. Amazing ! The girl is reckoned handsome indeed—but then to forget me so soon !

Mrs.

LETTERS. 65

Mrs. Bruton, a cousin of Mr. Howard's, was the first person from whom I received this intelligence— spiteful creature ! she meant to mortify me, no doubt ; but I kept my countenance to a miracle.—Heigh-ho ! This won't do, though, Harriet— I shall begin to think—but away reflection, which I always detested, and am now most unfit for. I stept to my glass, to see how this new emotion suited my complexion — good heavens, what a wretch ! Why I have absolutely got the despairing look of antiquated virginity. If I had loved the man indeed !—but I never felt the least inclination for him, till after his *dismission*—do, my dear, let me call it so.

My uncle leaves Bath on Monday, and your humble servant must accompany him. I shall spend some time with you in Essex, however, before I return to the Thorns— but don't be malicious, child, and let not the name of Elvin escape your lips, as you value the friendship of

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LETTER CXXXII.

Lady FORTESCUE to Miss HOWARD.

IT is unnecessary to tell you how sincerely I partake in your present happiness. You are too well convinced of my friendship to require any further assurances of it, and know that my best wishes are ever your's.

I am no stranger to Mr. Elvin's character, nor is he indeed personally unknown to me. I can therefore repeat the praises you so justly lavish upon him. What can be expected from such an union, but the most permanent felicity ! Oh ! how unlike that fatal connection !—forgive me, my dear Clarissa, for thus intruding upon those moments, which ought to be devoted to far different emotions—I will lay aside my pen for a few minutes.



I left Park-hill last week. Mr. Lesley was then much indisposed, but intended visiting Claremont in a few days. Heaven restore the health of that valuable man, which is so essential to the welfare of our E-mily, and to the happiness of all his friends. That dear creature frequently mentions Sir Charles Royston. She speaks of him with tenderness, but without regret. She no longer repines at the interruption of an attachment, of the impropriety of which she is fully convinced. “ Ah, my dear Lady Fortescue, said she to me one day, when we were talking upon this subject, how little able are we, short-sighted mortals, to judge what is best for us ? Had my union with Sir Charles taken place, might not the solicitudes of a new connection have rendered me inattentive to those duties, which now constitute my greatest happiness ? And how much does declining age require the tender assiduities of filial love ! — Can I then murmur at the decrees of providence ? — No — my heart submits without reluctance to the will of heaven, convinced that whatever it ordains, is right.”

Mr.

68 L E T T E R S.

Mr. Beverly was at Park-hill some days last week. He is going to Ireland with his friend Mr. Shirley, who has lately purchased an estate there, and wants him to be present whilst he is making some alterations upon it.

Mr. Beverly desired his respectful compliments "to the agreeable Miss Howard."

I must now bid you adieu, as Mr. Beauchamp and Sir Edward are this moment arrived, and I am impatient to welcome them to Claremont.

Your's,

MARIANNE FORTESCUE.

L E T -

LETTER CXXXIII.

Miss FREELOVE to Lady DORMER.

YES, my dear Lady Bab, I am still in Essex. I had only to choose between two evils, and this was the least—and bad enough on my conscience. To be excluded from all those scenes of gaiety my heart delights in!—Oh, that I were free and independent—but the time will come—’till then, I must submit, as patiently as I can, to what is unavoidable.

Mrs. Wilmot has been in Essex some time; Sir Charles is therefore a frequent guest. He is really a divine fellow, but so engrossed by his fair widow, that he has no eyes for any one else. Lovers are odious animals! But Sir Charles will soon become rational again: marriage is an excellent restorative for the senses.

Lady

70 LETTERS.

Lady Sydney doats upon this Mrs. Wil-mot ; and why ? Self-love, child ! — because she listens with attention to her *Ante-diluvian* tales, nor interrupts the tedious harangue—like a certain person of your acquaintance, with a — “ Yes, madam ; so I remember you told me before, &c.”

But why should I write further about these silly souls ! Yet, alas ! what else have I to say ?

Farewel ; I am devoured with the vapours, and therefore, in pity to us both, I will conclude myself abruptly, your's,

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LET-

LETTERS.

LETTER CXXXIV.

Lady Essex to Lady Ossory.

SIR John has received a letter this week, which will hasten our return to London: we intend leaving Bath the latter end of next week.

Miss Howard, in compliance with our wishes of having the nuptials performed, previous to our departure, has consented to give her hand to my brother on Monday, and we are all so busy in making preparations for that important day! —for Mr. Howard is determined to have a public wedding, contrary to the wishes of his fair niece; but she will not oppose his inclinations. Mr. and Miss Lesley were the first invited guests; but the former is not well enough to undertake so long a journey, and Miss Lesley could not think of leaving him. How tenderly are these amiable friends attached

tached to each other, and what fervent prayers does the lovely Emily offer up for the happiness of her Clarissa ! May they be effectual !—but indeed, my dear Lady Offory, there is no room for doubt.

Our dear friends will not return with us to town, as Mr. Howard cannot part with his beloved niece so soon after her marriage ; but Sir John is to get every thing ready for them in Berkley-square, as they do not intend to be long absent.—What pleasure shall I experience in presenting to your Ladyship my amiable sister, who is prepared to love you.

Compliments to Lord Offory and his Henrietta, from Sir John, and your

SOPHIA ESSEX.

L E T -

LETTER CXXXV.

Miss FREELOVE to Lady DORMER.

WE were sitting at breakfast this morning, when a servant entered with the news-papers. Lady Sydney, who dearly loves these busy intelligencers, put on her specs, and began reading; when, lo! the name of Elvin caught her attention, and she turned to the interesting period, which contained an account of his marriage with Miss Howard. Bless me, my dear, what a profusion of endowments were bestowed upon the bride!—not one of which she probably possesses.

I hope Lady Essex is satisfied, now her brother is so *prudently* disposed of.—How I detest these matchmakers! Lady Sydney looked at me, when she had finished the paragraph. Harriet wished them happiness,

ness, and the gentle Wilmot—but, after all, who could have imagined, that he would have forgot me so soon ! me, whom he seemed to love so tenderly !—had I not thought him securely mine, I should not have trifled with him as I did ; but how came I to make this confession, so unworthy a girl of spirit ! I have absolutely lived with these soft souls, until I have acquired all their dove-like qualities. But think how I am situated, amongst shady groves, and purling streams, with the continual presence of two the most tender lovers in England —what virgin heart of twenty would not be softened by such seducing scenes.

Lady Sydney and Harriet are just gone into Mrs. Wilmot's apartment, after having had a long conference in private with Sir Charles. I fancy there is some secret going forward—stay—the partition is thin—I will listen——“ No longer defer Sir Charles's happiness ; punctilio has been enough regarded.” Well said, Harriet !—I am ignorant, however, of the result ; but suppose their endeavours were successful :

ful: these widows are seldom hard-hearted.

Adieu. When shall I assure you personally how much I am,

Your's,

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LETTER CXXXVI.

Mrs. ELVIN to Lady FORTESCUE.

I Am truly sorry to find, that I shall be obliged to leave Bath, without paying my respects to your Ladyship at Claremont. My uncle, after having kept us a long time in suspence, has at length determined to set off for London on Monday next; and Mr. Elvin is to accompany me to-morrow to Park-hill, where we propose spending two or three days.

E 2

I am

76 LETTERS.

I am impatient to see my Emily, yet dread the meeting ; for, alas ! Madam, the good Mr. Lesley—but you know, you regret his situation.

I will not finish this letter till my return from Park-hill, as I shall then be able to give your Ladyship a particular account of our friend.

* * * * *

We returned to Bath last night. Oh, how did the sight of Mr. Lesley affect me ! He wished me joy, but I could not speak to him. Emily pressed me to her bosom. We endeavoured to restrain our tears, but our looks too expressively declared the agitations of our hearts. Mr. Lesley soon after withdrew. My beloved friend then unburthened all her sorrows. She eagerly asked our opinion of her father's situation ; yet her very inquiries shewed her despair. What could we say ? Is it honest to excite hopes, which cannot, I fear,

LETTERS. 77

I fear, be gratified? Never did Mr. Lesley appear so amiable as at this interesting period. He endeavours to render Emily cheerful; but how vain are his attempts! she gazes upon him with a melancholy tenderness; the tears gush into her lovely eyes; she tries to conceal her emotions, and retires to give vent to a grief, which is too violent for restraint. O, thou gracious being, to whom every event is possible, restore to my Emily this best of parents!—or, if thou hast otherwise ordained, grant her fortitude equal to such a trial!

I cannot describe our parting. Scarcely could I bid Mr. Lesley adieu, when I reflected that it might possibly be the last time I should ever behold him. Mr. Elvin begged me, in a whisper, to conceal my agitations, for the sake of our dear friends. Mr. Lesley wept—I seized his hand, and pressed it tenderly to my lips; and having again embraced my Emily, I threw myself hastily into the chaise; and Mr. Elvin following me—it drove away.

78 L E T T E R S.

I rejoice to find that your Ladyship will return to Park-hill, when Mr. Beauchamp and Sir Edward leave Claremont. Our Emily's situation requires all the aids of friendship, to render it supportable.

Mr. Elvin begs leave to add his respectful devoirs to those of your Ladyship's

Affectionate humble servant,

CLARISSA ELVIN.

L E T:

LETTER CXXXVII.

Lady FORTESCUE to Mrs. ELVIN.

IT was no small mortification to me, my dear Mrs. Elvin, that I could not have the pleasure of your company, before you left Bath. I had promised Sir Edward, that I would introduce him to you, and our beloved Miss Lesley, (whom he has not seen since her infancy) and he was not a little chagrined at the disappointment. He set off with Mr. Beauchamp last week for * * *. He does not intend leaving him until he returns to France. I am uncertain when I shall see him again at Claremont.

I went to Park-hill the day after the gentlemen left me, with the design of spending some time with our dear friends; but the very morning after my arrival, I received a letter from Lady C——, inform-

E 3 ing

ing me, that her Ladyship would be at Claremont that week in her way to London. I was truly concerned to hear of her intention ; but it was then too late to postpone the visit.

Mr. Lesley was rather better when I left Park-hill ; but a letter, which I received yesterday from Emily, has filled me with apprehensions upon his account ; and to add to my vexation, Lady C—— is confined to her room with a rheumatic complaint, which must necessarily delay her journey to town.
I remain, with my best compliments to Mr. Elvin and your uncle, dear Mrs. Elvin's sincerely affectionate
MARIANNE FORTESCUE.

LET-

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LETTER CXXXVIII.

Miss LESLEY to Lady FORTESCUE.

O H ! Madam, what will become of the wretched Emily !—My dear, dear father is very bad—his eyes have a dying languor—Good heavens ! must I then lose him !—lose him for ever ! the thought is distraction ! Hasten, dear Lady Fortescue, I conjure you, to my assistance—support your Emily in this trying hour--greatly does she stand in need of your presence.

* * * * *

My father called me just now to his bedside. He wishes to see you before—I cannot proceed.

I send this letter by a special messenger, and remain, in the utmost anxiety and impatience, dearest Madam,

Your's,

EMILY LESLEY.

LETTER CXXXIX.

Lady FORTESCUE to Mrs. ELVIN.

I Imagine Lady C—— informed you, that I was at Park-hill. I found Mr. Lesley much worse than even my fears had foreboded.

Emily flew to meet me, as soon as I got out of the coach.—“ Oh Madam, said she weeping, and is it thus we meet again ?” I could not speak to her for some moments. But at length, recollecting that the principal motive of my visit was to console this dear creature under the impending trial, I assumed all my fortitude, and used every argument which reason and religion suggested, to mitigate her distress.

She withdrew, soon after, to inform Mr. Lesley of my arrival ; and returned immediately, in order to conduct me into his chamber.

I was

I was greatly affected at seeing him. He pressed my hand—the tears came into his eyes—and he turned away his face to conceal his emotion. Emily withdrew from the bedside. “My dear Lady Fortescue, said he at last, in a faint voice, all will now be over in a few days —— do not, however, pursued he, perceiving my agitations, —do not thus sorrow as one without hope. Remember, my dear friend, that this is only a momentary separation, and that we shall meet again, in a far better state I trust, to part no more. Let this thought be your consolation. — O! my friend, continued he in a joyful rapture, you know not what foretastes—what delightful hopes !” —But alas ! my Emily—there—there’s the sting—to leave my child—that indeed is dying.” Ah my friend, my dear, dear friend, returned I, half drowned in tears, if we must lose you—the dear Emily—my care—my tenderness—I could not proceed.” “Enough, enough, Madam, rejoined he ; to that care, that tenderness I consign her. I thank thee, O my God ! for this inestimable friend ; every wish of
my

my heart is satisfied ; and death has lost all its terrors."

Adieu, dear Mrs. Elvin ; I will soon write again.

M. FORTESCUE.

LETTER CXL.

Lady FORTESCUE to Mrs. ELVIN.

My dear friend, what a scene have I this night been witness to ! Never will it be effaced from my remembrance. I retired to my chamber about eleven o'clock, in order to get a little rest, not having slept above an hour the two preceding nights. Emily (who has had a bed put up in the closet adjoining to Mr. Lesley's room) had lain down in her cloaths. I was just falling into a gentle slumber, when somebody knocked at the door. I flew to open

open it ; it was the servant, who, with distraction in her countenance, eagerly informed me, that her dear master was dying. I hastened to his apartment—but, good heavens ! what an affecting scene presented itself ! Emily leaning upon the bed, supported her expiring parent—their faces closely united, and the same clay-cold palleness visible in each. Mr. Lesley was in a fainting fit, and it was a long time before he recovered his sences. At length, however, he opened his languid eyes, and fixed them upon the darling of his heart ; he could not speak, but he endeavoured to press her to his almost lifeless bosom, whilst she sunk between those paternal arms, which had so often strained her with the most enraptured fondness.

* * * * *

Oh ! Mrs. Elvin, I cannot proceed. Mr. Lefley is no more—he expired about an hour ago in the arms of his beloved Emily.

* * * * *

Tuesday night,

Mr.

Mr. Howard is just arrived. Emily has read your letter, and will endeavour to answer it. Farewell, my dear friend. My spirits are too much agitated to suffer me to write further.

MARIANNE FORTESCUE.

LETTER CXLI.

From the Same..

I have anxiously waited for an opportunity of visiting, unperceived by any one, the remains of my dear departed friend, and this morning chance favoured my wishes.

I softly entered the room where the coffin stood; it was not yet fastened down; I removed the cloth which covered his pale face. Ah! my dear Clarissa, how awful, how affecting is such a spectacle! I scarcely seemed to breath—a thousand sad ideas took possession of my soul. I cast back my thoughts.

thoughts to that period, when nothing intruded to interrupt our happiness—alas, what a change! I then looked towards the tremendous future—at such a prospect, every worldly tie seems to be dissolved ; every aspiring wish is subdued. Ye fleeting, ye unsatisfactory enjoyments, where are ye now, and what is your amount! I gazed upon him, without even knowing what I beheld ; I was absolutely lost in contemplation, when suddenly starting from my reverie, I perceived the wretched Emily. She hastily approached the mournful receptacle, and after having surveyed it for some moments with the most eager attention—she took one of his clay-cold hands, and pressed it to her lips. “ And is this the last time, exclaimed she—shall I never—never see thee more, my excellent parent! —To be laid in the dark grave, a prey for worms ! —Great God, pursued she, her hands clasped together in an agony of grief, why, why are we thus separated ?—Oh ! my father, would to heaven I had died with thee !

* * * * *

I have this moment received your letter, and rejoice in your intention of visiting Park-hill. I hope our united influence will be powerful enough to prevail upon Emily to leave this melancholy spot, where every object reminds her of her irreparable loss.

Mr. Howard returns to Bath immediately after the funeral.

Adieu ! I long to embrace you.

MARIANNE FORTESCUE.

LET

LETTER CXLII.

LADY FORTESCUE to SIR EDWARD
FORTESCUE.

IT was indeed owing to the illness of my beloved friend, Miss Lesley, that your last letter remained so long unanswered. The dear creature has been in the greatest danger. Mrs. Elvin and I never left her bedside, but she was for several days insensible of our presence, and called incessantly for her father. How affecting was such a scene! I sometimes feared that Mrs. Elvin would have sunk beneath the trial, but heaven graciously interposed in our favour, and restored to us our invaluable friend.

The physicians judging the Bath waters necessary for the perfect re-establishment of Miss Lesley's health, we have at length prevailed upon her to undertake the journey, and I shall attend her to Mr. Howard's next week.

Mrs.

90 LETTERS.

Mrs. Elvin wishes her to go to London immediately after her leaving Bath; but the gaiety and dissipation of the great world, would but ill suit with the dejection of her tender mind; and the intimacy, which subsists between Mr. Elvin and Sir Charles Royston, is an additional reason for her declining the invitation. I believe therefore she will be with me at Claremont; her company will enliven my solitude, and render me truly happy.

Mr. Lesley has left the little fortune of Emily intirely at her own disposal. Independance can have no danger for a mind like her's. She possesses at nineteen that prudence, which is generally the attendant only upon maturer age.

When does Mr. Beauchamp leave England? Present my best compliments to him; and believe me ever

Your most affectionate mother,

And sincerest friend,

M. FORTESCUE.

LETTER CXLIII.

Miss FREELOVE to Lady DORMER.

To-morrow is the important day, that will give the lovely Louisa Wilmot to the eager wishes of her dear Sir Charles. Harriet and I are to be bride-maids. The ceremony is to be performed here, at the earnest request of Lady Sydney. Lord and Lady Offory are expected this evening.

I doat on the bustle, and should not much care if I was the occasion of it.

This marriage was to have taken place some time ago, but was postponed upon Miss Lesley's account; for her father dying just at that period, the tender Louisa would not give her hand to Sir Charles, whilst Emily was in such a situation.
“The hearing of our union, said Mrs. Wilmot to him, would at any time, I fear, affect

affect her ; but how greatly so, in this hour of sorrow ! What must the dear creature have suffered in losing such a parent ? And shall we add to her distress—we, who owe every thing to her generosity ! ” Do you understand this, Dormer ? Such consideration for a rival is rather uncommon. But these *sentimental* women are such eccentric beings !

Lady Sydney and Harriet are gone to take an airing in the chariot. Sir Charles drives Mrs. Wilmot in his phaeton. I was invited to be of the party, but chose to devote my time to your Ladyship—an interruption for the present.

* * * * *

Sir Charles has brought me such a delicious nosegay for to-morrow.—Oh ! this to-morrow !—we can none of us think of any thing else !—another interruption — Lord and Lady Offory are arrived, and I have not another moment to spare.

Adieu, my dear ; your’s.

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LETTER CXLIV.

Lady FORTESCUE to Mrs. ELVIN.

MISS Lesley has been with me at Claremont near a month. I left Bath greatly indisposed; what did not the dear creature suffer during my confinement! She upbraided herself with being the occasion of my disorder. "It is I, said she weeping, I, who am so highly indebted to your goodness, who, alas! the fatal cause of your sufferings. Intirely engrossed by my own sorrows, I have been inattentive to all the duties of friendship. Ungenerous Emily! thy concern for the dead has rendered thee ungrateful to the living.—Ah, if heaven should deprive me of my inestimable friend, could I dare to lament the cruelty of my fate—I, who have been so insensible of her value!"

In

In a few days, however, my indisposition abated, and every other emotion was absorbed in her joy at my safety. I no longer lamented my illness, since it was that which first drew her from the delirium of sorrow, which, till then, had engrossed all her faculties.

Soon after, Lord Merton and his two daughters came to spend a week at Claremont.

My health not being perfectly re-established, Miss Lefley was left to entertain them. A diversity of scene necessarily produces an alteration of sentiments, and Emily became every day less melancholy.

It was at this time that we heard of Sir Charles Royston's marriage. The intelligence tenderly affected me, but Emily's conduct soon dispelled every fear.

* * * * *

I am obliged to you for your enquiries after Sir Edward, whose return I am in daily

daily expectation of, Mr. Beauchamp having left England. He is well, and ignorant of my late confinement.

Lady Frances Merton is still at Claremont. I requested the favour of her company on Emily's account. I would not have her continually alone with me. Youth is the season for chearfulness, and she is naturally but too much disposed to melancholy

I remain, with compliments to Mr. Elvin,

Your's,

MARIANNE FORTESCUE.

L E T

LETTER CXLV.

Miss FREELOVE to Lady DORMER.

Sydney Grove has been the seat of pleasure, since Sir Charles's marriage—nothing but feastings, balls, and entertainments—*a propos*, did you know Sir Harry Wilton was come to live at H——? which is only four miles from hence. He gave a magnificent ball, this week, to all the neighbouring families, and who, do you think, were amongst the guests? No other than Elvin and his dainty spouse; they came with Mrs.——. I was confused at seeing him; but the wretch regarded me only with a look of care!ess indifference. His wife too observed me without emotion. Detestable composure! Could I have excited one uneasy sensation in her mind, I had been happy. Contempt, nay, insolence had been supportable; but surely, my dear Lady Bab, there can be nothing so provoking

ing, as the finding myself too unimportant even for resentment.

On Monday next Sir Charles and Lady Royston, Harriet and your humble servant, set off for the Thorns.

May I not expect to see you in the country this summer? Your presence can alone render it agreeable to me, and novelty might give it charms, even in the eyes of your Ladyship.

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LETTER CXLVI.

Sir EDWARD FORTESCUE to Mr.
BEAUCHAMP.

I Rejoice to hear of your safe arrival at Paris, and that you found Sir William Beauchamp, and the rest of your amiable family, in perfect health.

I came to Claremont on Tuesday last. The ladies were gone to a concert, given by Colonel Ashby. I immediately changed my dress and followed them. The concert was begun, but I found a vacant seat near Lady Fortescue. After the first compliments were over, I enquired after her fair guests, and particularly which of the ladies was Miss Lesley. "What think you, returned she, of that lady in white?" casting her eyes upon Lady Frances. I looked dissatisfied. "How, Sir Edward, rejoined my

my mother, perceiving my disappointed countenance; why, is she not very handsome?" "True Madam; but that lady next her, in my opinion, is infinitely more so." Lady Fortescue smiled——"I believe you have deceived me, Madam, returned I." "Yes, my son, said she, that indeed is my Emily——the other is the much admired Lady Frances Merton."

A common observer might, perhaps, think the latter as beautiful as Miss Lesley. Her features are as regular, and her complexion as delicately transparent; but where is that air of sensibility, those expressive graces, which would render deformity agreeable, and without which even beauty cannot charm! Yet, alas, how often are these winning attractions assumed, on purpose to betray the unwary heart, which was too honest to suspect, that insincerity and vice could dwell under so fair a form! Deceitful, dangerous sex! But, hold! general reflections are always proofs of a weak or wicked mind, and I detest them.

100, L E T T E R S.

We are going to Lord Merton's next week, to carry home Lady Frances, and are to remain some time at the hall. His Lordship is half in love, it seems, with Miss Lesley, whom he calls his rose-bud. The young ladies, however, are jealous of his encomiums, and of her apparent superiority in every acquirement. A country girl to excel such courtly ladies!—amazing! they are not a little puzzled about it.

I beg you would present my respectful devoirs to your family, and believe me ever,

Dear Beauchamp,

Your's,

EDWARD FORTESCUE.

L E T -

LETTER CXLVII.

Miss SYDNEY to Lady OSSORY.

WE have had such a multiplicity of engagements, ever since our arrival at the Thorns, that I have not had a leisure moment, to devote even to my dear Lady Offory.

But after having been persecuted almost to death, and going through all those tedious ceremonies, which custom has imposed upon these occasions, we are at length left to be happy in our own way, and to enjoy all the tranquil pleasures of this sweet retirement.

O, Lady Offory, when I cast back my eyes to those painful scenes I was once witness to in this place, when I recollect the tender regret, the anxious fears, which the

situation of our Louisa then excited in my soul, and view the great, the delightful change—behold her amiable virtues so justly rewarded by your excellent brother, my joy is beyond expression, and I have nothing to wish for, but the continuance of her felicity.

It is the constant study of Sir Charles and Lady Royston to diffuse happiness around them. Their charity is not confined to the temporal wants of the necessitous; it extends also to their well-being in a future state of existence.

" We complain, says Sir Charles, of the wickedness of the lower class of people; but do we take any pains to prevent, or impede the progress of immorality, either by the weight of precept, or the force of example? On the contrary, is there a vice to be found amongst the meaner part of mankind, which is not equally practised by those who vainly stile themselves their superiors? The clergy, whose particular duty it is to lead them gently in the paths of virtue,

virtue, too often neglect the important work, and even, I blush to say it, by their own irregularities, render religion an object of ridicule to some, and of disbelief to others. The rector of this parish, continued he smiling, is not a little displeased at the moderation of my sentiments with regard to the methodists, of which we have a pretty large number ; but, besides motives of policy (for opposition would but increase the evil he laments) I have other reasons for my silence. Any religion is, I believe, better than none at all : and these itinerant gentry, though they weaken the head, may sometimes perhaps amend the heart ; at least, pursued he, I would have him use no other methods to recal his wandering flock, than the gentle arts of persuasion and advice.”

* * * * *

Just returned from a benevolent round with Sir Charles and Lady Royston. This amiable pair entered the dwellings of their sick and indigent neighbours with a sweet-

ness and humility that charmed me. They eagerly inquired after their welfare, and listened to the artless detail of their sorrows, with the attention of hearts disposed to relieve them.

My cousin happened to meet us in our ramble, and we went home with her to tea. The giddy Charlotte rallied Sir Charles upon the care he took to provide for a set of creatures, whose situation, she said, rendered them beneath the notice of a man of his rank, and who, it was probable, were undeserving of his favours, or at least insensible of his bounty.

The expressive countenance of Sir Charles betrayed his contempt of her observation.
 " I hope, Madam, returned he gravely, I shall never think any of my fellow creatures unworthy my regard ; and indeed in what respect are they inferior to me, except in the adventitious circumstances of rank and fortune ? in merit, perhaps, how greatly my superiors !

I allow

" I allow that there may be some amongst them, who deserve the reproaches, which you unjustly cast upon all. But shall virtue suffer for the faults of the vicious ? Shall benevolence be banished, because some are undeserving of her favours ?

" We are apt to set too high a value upon our benefactions, and consequently to expect inadequate returns ; whereas we ought not to be disappointed, if the relief we have afforded is not always repaid by gratitude.

—But what of that ?—we shall have our reward, and of that being, from whom alone it ought to be expected. Good heaven ! pursued Sir Charles, his colour rising as he spoke, and his eyes sparkling with benevolence, can there be so great, so godlike an action, as that of diffusing happiness ! To dispel the cares of poverty, to wipe the trickling tear from palsied age, and pay its grey hairs each due reverence ? Can any gratification, which pomp or luxury affords, be equal to this luxury of the mind, this inexpressible, delightful sensation, which elevates the soul to heaven, and

it for the joys of immortality!" "Well, well, said my gay cousin, every one has his taste—but I am amazed Lady Royston should have the complaisance to attend you in your charitable visits."—"Indeed Miss Freelo^e, interrupted Lady Royston hastily, I will not have you impute my attendance to such a motive; the pleasure I receive from them, is greater than any I ever experienced in the politest circles.

I have found more happiness in a cottage, than in the most splendid drawing-room; deceit and scandal are banished the lowly roof, and innocence, and rustic plainness adorn the peaceful dwelling." Charlotte replied only with a look of astonishment, and a careless shrug of her shoulders.—But I resign the pen to our dear Louisa.

* * * * *

My Harriet has allowed me to peruse her letter—bless me, what encomiums! Those she bestows upon Sir Charles are justly merited. He is the best—the tenderest—but so

so I have told you a hundred times before.—And how does my good brother and his saucy wife? Both well, and preparing for a journey to the Thorns. Remember your promises; they are sacred things, child—besides, in your situation, delays are dangerous.

Sir Charles enters the room. Writing my dear Louisa? and to our Henrietta?—Will you allow me to finish the letter? Most certainly.—He is going to chide you, my dear friend; and, what is more astonishing still, your Louisa consents to it.

* * * * *

Tell me, my obstinate sister, do you not repent of your not accompanying us to the Thorns? I know you do, though like a true woman, you scorn to acknowledge an error. And how dare you, my insolent brother, make this remark upon the sex, and your wife at your elbow? — Why, child, she is an angel, not a woman, and consequently

108 L E T T E R S.

consequently the remark is not so ill timed as you imagined. My Louisa, however, disclaims all right to the appellation, nor will she ever accept of a compliment at the expence of her sex.

Adieu, my dear Henrietta. Say every thing for me to my Ossory, and believe me your

CHARLES ROYSTON.

L E T T E R CXLVIII.

Lady OSSORY to Miss SYDNEY.

I Was sitting in my drawing-room yesterday, dozing over a novel, which accidentally lay upon the window, when the servant entered, followed by Mr. Beverly. He could not have come at a more favourable juncture. I was tired of my employment, of myself, and all around me, (take notice

notice, by the bye, that my good man was absent) and received his unexpected visit with peculiar satisfaction.

He sets off for the Thorns to-morrow, being quite impatient to see Sir Charles, and my sister Royston. His stay however will be short, as he is engaged to meet Mr. Shirley in town on Saturday next.

Did my situation allow me the liberty of following my inclinations, I should certainly accompany him in his flying visit—but that is impossible. After all, Harriet, it is an odious circumstance—but we will talk no more of it.

Lady Sydney came to town yesterday, and I paid my compliments to her this morning. The good lady begins to talk of your return. Consider, child, you have already staid a month beyond your time ; but you are an unconscionable girl.

Adieu. I have nothing to say—and therefore will hasten to subscribe myself,

Your

HENRIETTA OSSORY.

NO LETTERS.

LETTER CXLIX.

Miss LESLEY to Mrs. ELVIN.

WE left Merton-hall last week. I am charmed with the amiable owner of that delightful seat. The frankness of his manners please me far better than all the unmeaning politeness of the Great — truth can never be disagreeable to those who are not compelled to fear it.

His Lordship is extremely attached to Sir Edward Fortescue ; nor is Lady Frances, I believe, insensible of his merit. Sir Edward's situation has something in it so truly pitiable, that it excites in every feeling mind a prepossession in his favour, which, in a heart so young and tender as her Ladyship's, may be easily converted into a softer emotion.

Who

L E T T E R S . 111

Who indeed can behold, unmoved, a man so amiable, so formed for domestic happiness, united to one, who disregards every thing that ought to be dear and sacred, and is known only to be despised ?

I have for some time been attempting to take a likeness of my dear Lady Fortescue, and have at length succeeded tolerably well ; at least her Ladyship is pleased to think so.

She has requested me, with an earnestness which I could not refuse, to draw Sir Edward for her ; as she has several pictures of him, but none of them like the original : I have consented, upon condition, that they never mention it as my performance, and Sir Edward will not suffer me to forget my promise.

This employment serves to divert my thoughts from more serious subjects, and as Lady Fortescue and Sir Edward are so assiduous in their endeavours to divert me, it would be cruel in me to appear melancholy.

I have

is, devotions, blest and blessed are we
when we set before us the commandments of our
abiding King who on bountiful occasions

I have this moment received your letter, and rejoice to hear of your intention of visiting Claremont, in your way to Bath. — But, my dear friend, have you then accepted of your aunt's invitation, and do you and Mr. Elvin really propose going to Holland in a month at farthest ? Lady Essex, Sir John, and your uncle are to accompany you—I am half angry with them for their complaisance.

I have informed Lady Fortescue of your visit to Claremont, and she will write to you by the return of the post, to thank you for an intention, so agreeable to her wishes.

Sir Edward Fortescue is gone into G * * shire, so that you will not have the pleasure of seeing him, as you seem to hope for.

Adieu, my dear friend; I long to embrace you.

EMILY LESLEY.

LETTER CL.

Mrs. ELVIN to Lady ESSEX.

YOUR predictions were well founded, my dear Lady Essex; we did not leave Claremont till the latter-end of last week

The company of my beloved Emily, was a pleasure I could with difficulty bring myself to resign; my intended voyage too, rendered the separation more affecting, and our adieus were truly melancholy.

Sir Edward Fortescue was absent during our visit, but he spent two days with us at Bath in his way to Claremont.

I am, more than ever, incensed against the unworthy Lady Lucy, since I have seen this amiable man; who has merits sufficient to secure any heart, except that, which

which he ought wholly to have possessed. He mentioned Miss Lesley with all the tenderness of fraternal affection, and listened with pleasure to the praises I so justly bestowed upon her—*a propos*, I forgot to tell you, that the dear creature has made a conquest, and no inconsiderable one, I assure you.

Do you remember Colonel Manly at Bath? He has taken a house near Claremont, and is a frequent visitor at Lady Fortescue's.

Her Ladyship perceives his partiality for her fair friend, and seems desirous of increasing it. His fortune is very considerable, and his character unquestionable.

We made two or three little excursions, during our stay at Claremont, and the colonel always contrived to be of the party; all his assiduities were directed to Emily; she received them with the utmost politeness, unaccompanied by any tenderer emotion. Her blindness to her own perfections

L E T T E R S. 115

tions renders her insensible of the motives of his attention; the discovery of them would make her unhappy — I therefore took care to conceal my suspicions, and Lady Fortescue for the same reason is equally reserved.

I wish to see her engaged in a connection, from whence arises the greatest happiness in life; but so well do I know her sentiments, as to be convinced, that if ever she should be again entangled by a passion, which her past sufferings have rendered obnoxious to her, she must be insensibly drawn into the snare, nor discover the danger till it is too late to avoid it.

The assiduities of an amiable man may perform wonders; she sees few besides him, and none more agreeable; these circumstances are greatly in his favour.

How often, since my acquaintance with Sir Edward Fortescue, have I wished him disengaged? His uncommon merit — the similarity of their sentiments — I am interrupted

116 LETTERS.

rupted — and have only time to add, that we shall be in London on Friday evening, and that my uncle is impatient to begin his journey.

I remain your's, &c.

CLARISSA ELVIN.

L E T T E R C L I.

Sir EDWARD FORTESCUE to Mr.
BEAUCHAMP.

I Returned to Claremont yesterday, and was received by Lady Fortescue with her usual tenderness. Miss Lesley too—my sister Emily, I should say, for she allows me to call her by that endearing epithet—seemed pleased to see me.

For my own part, I rejoiced to embrace again two friends so dear to my heart. All my wishes are confined to this enchant-

ing

ing spot ; it is here only that I experience true happiness,—say what you will, Beau-champ, there is a softness, a delicacy, even in the friendship which we feel for the female sex, that we men can never experience in our connections with each other.

Don't you remember the grotto at Clare-mont, which you used to visit with such delight ? It is now the favourite retreat of the fair Emily.

I have had a rustic bench placed near it, and adorned it with jessamine and honeysuckle ; these, since my absence, have been her care,—“ and under her fair tendance gladlier grew.” With what rapture do I sit here, listening to the music of her melodious voice, which the murmuring of the distant cascade renders more enchanting ! Oh ! my friend, how exquisite are these delights, how preferable to those tumultuous pleasures the giddy world pursues !



I have

218 LETTERS.

I have this moment received a letter from Mr. Freeman, with one inclosed in it from Lady Lucy to him.

That wretched woman is again involved in debt—she has begged him to interpose in her behalf—he knew not how to act—unworthy as she is of the favour she petitions for. This affair interrupts, she says, the repose of her life; ah can the guilty mind expect repose !

Never was I so averse to her petitions ; I cannot, will not listen to them ; she is become more detestable in my sight than ever ; the virtues of the lovely Emily—but it is criminal to think of them together.

I will write to Mr. Freeman, but it shall be a denial—I cast her off for ever. Were I to grant her request, my presence would be necessary in London, and I will not leave Claremont upon such an account. No, let her suffer—what are her woes compared to mine ! Ah ! my father, little did you imagine

LETTERS. 119

gine the evils your ambition would inflict upon your unhappy son, else surely you had withdrawn the stern decree, that forced him into this fatal connection!—But who could have supposed, that one educated in the austerity of a convent—yet might not that seclusion be the occasion of those errors I lament?—But hold, I see Miss Lesley entering the park—a sufficient apology for my throwing aside my pen.

* * * * *

What an alteration! my resolutions are vanished—I have consented to Mr. Freeman's request, and am even preparing for my journey to town.—You are surprised—and whence the mighty change you say!—Ah! who could effect it, but that irresistible maid, whose power is unlimited! She interceded for the wretched Lucy—how impossible to resist such eloquence! — I sacrificed my resentment to her entreaties. She hopes for her reformation from my generosity.—“ Who knows, Sir Edward, says

the amiable girl, whether this kindness of yours may not excite her gratitude, and render her once more worthy your affection." No, no—I can never love her again; I may pity, I may forgive her; but more is impossible. Blest with the friendship of the lovely Emily, and the tenderness of the best of parents, I have not a wish beyond. Adieu!

EDWARD FORTESCUE.

LETTER CLII.

From the Same.

YOU ask me "whether I have forgot the promise I made at parting, of writing to you every month? I answer in the negative. Yet perhaps it would have been better that I had done so, than to remember, and not perform it.

But

But I returned only last night, from a tour with my mother and Miss Lesley to ** and **. Colonel Stanley and his sister Lady Daire were of the party. No attention was wanting to render the excursion agreeable, but I must confess that I never spent my time with less satisfaction. Lady Daire is lively ; she would fain be humorously so, but generally fails in the attempt. She chose to be very particular in her behaviour towards me ; I was never less disposed for gallantry : yet politeness—I verily believe that, had the jaunt lasted a day longer, I should not have preserved my complaisance.

The Colonel is less gay than when I knew him at Paris. He spoke with seeming pleasure of the hours he had passed in my company, and wished for the renewal of our acquaintance.—What could I—or rather what did I say ? How detestable are those civilities, which are made at the expense of our sincerity !

I like not Colonel Stanley ; he is strangely altered since I first knew him, and yet I cannot at present tell you in what respects. Lady Fortescue is prejudiced in his favour ; she seems pleased with his attachment to Miss Lesley, which is indeed but too apparent—surely she does not endeavour—Emily at least—I know not what I was going to say.

An interruption—Colonel Stanley is below. And why is my company desired? His visits—are they made to me? Adieu!

This letter is unconnected, ridiculous ; I have not time however to write another.

EDWARD FORTESCUE.

LETTER CLIII.

From the Same.

YOUR letter has chagrined me beyond expression; you are mistaken, however, in the sentiments I feel for Miss Lesley.

Is it impossible for me to converse with an agreeable woman, without feeling emotions, which my unhappy situation would render criminal! Must I quit the only spot where I taste felicity, lest it should become too interesting to me! Alas! how few are my pleasures—and must those few be resigned! But your advice is as unnecessary, as your suspicions are without foundation—let us quit then this disagreeable subject.

I am going to drive Lady Fortescue in my phaeton to S—, this morning. Miss

G 2

Lesley

Lesley will not accompany us, as she is busy in writing letters to her friends abroad.

I intend (out of curiosity) to sound my mother respecting Colonel Stanley; it was one of the motives that induced me to request her company—but why did I tell you this? It will only serve to increase your suspicions.—The carriage is at the door—I hasten to attend Lady Fortescue.

Adieu, for the present.

Oh, Beauchamp can it be possible!—Good heavens! what a discovery! Miss Lesley—Colonel Stanley—yes, she returns his passion.

I saw him press her hand to his lips; she withdrew it indeed, but it was at my approach. Deceitful woman! it was for him then she waited at home this morning—he has obtained that heart which I—what am I going

I going to say?—can your suspicions then be just!—Ah Beauchamp, hide me, hide me from myself, from the suggestions of my own mind.

Where! alas, is that indifference so lately avowed, and gloried in?—Forgive me—pity me—I have deceived myself—what will not this fatal deception cost me! dearly shall I pay for my weak credulity!

The family are retired to rest, but sleep will this night be a stranger to my eyes.

I have treated Miss Lesley this evening with a coldness, that I saw surprised her—but, alas, of how little consequence is my displeasure! yet she seemed dejected, thoughtful.—What could occasion her melancholy? Loving and beloved, can there remain a wish unsatisfied?

Colonel Stanley has been here this morning; Miss Lesley behaved to him with a reserve that amazed me.—If she means to hide her regard, under the mask of dissimulation—can Emily then stoop to deceive? Ah, if so, I were less wretched.—But has she not discovered the distress of my mind, and may not the sweetness of her disposition induce her to act thus?—If this is really the case, she ought to be dearer to me than ever.

My dear friend, I want words to describe the transport of my soul! Miss Lesley has refused Colonel Stanley's addresses. "She can never think of him but with indifference, and therefore would not keep him a moment in suspense."—Angelic creature! But he would not be so hastily repulsed—his visit this morning displeased her
—she

—she has resolved never to see him more, unless he will treat her with the distance of a common acquaintance. Her sincerity chagrins him—my mother too regrets the impossibility of a connection, which she has always thought of with pleasure.

Colonel Stanely has long wished to come to an eclaircissement with Miss Lesley, but she always carefully avoided being alone with him.

He chanced to meet her yesterday in the park, where she went to walk after having finished her letters.

My dear Beauchamp, how happily has this meeting terminated! I may still enjoy the pleasure of seeing her, of endeavouring to cultivate that friendship, which constitutes all my happiness; of—but no—I ought, you say, “to avoid her—to leave Claremont immediately”—alas! how many obstacles oppose such a design! perhaps I take a pleasure in encreasing the number.

But is it then impossible to feel this tenderness, without exceeding the bounds which honour prescribes? Can there be any thing to fear from so amiable an object! No, no, my dear friend, were I ever to forget those ties which have hitherto restrained me, the sight of my Emily would immediately banish every unworthy emotion; the passion she inspires is like herself, pure and spotless.

Can it then, I repeat, be necessary to leave her—to see her no more—to renounce the pleasure of conversing with her.—Ah! how I detest that austerity—forgive me, Beauchamp—I know that friendship suggested your advice, and esteem you always.

EDWARD FORTESCUE.

L E T

S

ym'noi bsdliw yaoi oysd ylmsi adT
yqsd ed. of foexon ob I yusamco
toids L E T T E R S CLIV.

Miss LESLEY to Mrs. ELVIN.

OH! my dear friend, why are you absent at this interesting period, when your Emily so greatly requires your presence. Sir Edward has discovered that fatal attachment—discovered it too before Lady Daire, who is so irritated against me.—Our separation is become necessary—one of us must leave Claremont, and can I deprive Lady Fortescue of a son, whom she so tenderly values? Yet to leave this enchanting spot—to bid adieu to friends so dear, so valuable—but it must be so.

I have written to Lady Frances Merton, to inform her of my intention of passing some time with her at the hall.

The family have long wished for my company. I do not expect to be happy there—my heart has lost all relish for those pleasures which Lady Frances pursues with such avidity; but what could I do? The asylum is safe, it is honourable.—How sincerely does Lady Fortescue lament our separation! As to Sir Edward—but his distress is beyond description.

My gloomy mind sometimes presages the most dreadful consequences from the fatal indiscretion of Sir Edward. Colonel Stanley is proud, impatient, and tenderly attached to his sister; that artful woman—what may not her malicious representations effect!—but I forget that you are still ignorant of her late conduct—the particulars of it are too deeply engraven upon my memory to be easily erased.

I was sitting alone in the parlour this morning, (Lady Fortescue being gone with another Lady to pay a visit, and Sir Edward having rode out) when Lady Daire's chariot drove up to the door.

She

She paid her compliments to me with an unusual reserve, but I was too well acquainted with the cause to be surprised, or even offended by her behaviour.

I endeavoured to lead the conversation to indifferent subjects, but she would mention her brother.—She enlarged upon what he had suffered, from my late cruelty (as she termed it) and expressed her wonder at my conduct. “Colonel Stanley, Miss Lesley, said she, the colour rising as she spoke, is not to be despised. His family, his fortune, entitle him, I think, to the honour he sued for. But I am come to petition for him, and to endeavour to soften that obdurate heart of your’s.”

“Your Ladyship must excuse me, returned I, if I confess, that I am not a little surprised at this visit, after my having twice refused Colonel Stanley’s addresses. Had there been the least probability of my ever changing my sentiments, believe me, Madam, I had spoke less peremptorily—but that is out of the question.” “And why

why so, Miss, exclaimed her Ladyship haughtily ? let me tell you, you give yourself great airs upon this occasion, and receive as an affront, what you ought to consider as an obligation."

" Your Ladyship must forgive me, returned I rising, if I stay no longer to be insulted. — Did the Colonel know, continued I, how *tenderly* you *petition* for him, he would indeed wonder that my heart could be obdurate enough to resist such eloquence." " Stay, Miss, stay, replied she hastily, placing herself before me — neither the Colonel, nor myself, are ignorant of the *cause* of your rejecting him, and I must acknowledge that Sir Edward is much obliged to you, for having made such a sacrifice, to oblige him."

I don't understand you, returned I hastily—" O, no doubt, you are to-tal ly un-acquainted with his passion ; his sighs—his assiduities—have all escaped you.—Ah Miss Lesley, Miss Lesley, this dissimula-tion !—I abhor it, exclaimed I; innocence requires

requires it not—if Sir Edward really feels for me, that regard you suspect, he has been prudent enough not to divulge it”—I was proceeding when the door opened, and Sir Edward entered the room:—what an appearance!—Lady Daire’s face was crimsoned over with passion, mine bedewed with tears.—He eagerly inquired the cause—I was silent—Lady Daire soon informed him—foolish woman! how mean did resentment make her!—She accused him of having been the occasion—what did she not say?—her sarcasms irritated him—they produced a discovery of that regard which, but for her unkindness, would never, he said, have escaped his lips. She departed in a rage.

“ Alas! Sir Edward, said I, as soon as she was gone, we must part—every thing requires it—our peace—our reputation—yes, I will leave Claremont—I ought to do so!” “ How, Miss Lesley, exclaimed he hastily, part! did you say? can that be necessary? To lose, perhaps for ever, all that is dear and valuable—to be forgotten, or remembered

membered only with indifference."—"No, no, Sir Edward, returned I weeping, you shall ever possess my tenderest esteem;—you will be still my friend, my brother; and when you have conquered that unfortunate passion."—"Ah! hope it not, exclaimed he hastily, it is too deeply engraven on my soul—it is become even a part of my existence—what then remains but despair and wretchedness!" Here he stopt—and the entrance of Lady Fortescue prevented my answering him. Surprise was painted on her countenance. She had met Lady Daire, and stopt the chariot, in order to speak to her; but that haughty woman had forgot, in her resentment against me, that respect which was due to Lady Fortescue.—What could she think? The appearance of Sir Edward, and my distress, added to her apprehensions.

I related what had passed during her absence—it tenderly affected her—she is convinced of the necessity of our separation—and endeavours to reconcile Sir Edward to an event, which is become unavoidable.

but I do not

I am

I am interrupted by a message from Lady Fortescue.

Adieu! my dear; my next letter will be dated from Lord Merton's.

I remain yours,

EMILY LESLEY.

LETTER CLV.

Sir EDWARD FORTESCUE to Mr.
BEAUCHAMP.

B E satisfied, my dear friend — I shall leave Claremont to-morrow. But do not hope any thing from this resolution. — No, no, Beauchamp, I shall never recover at Paris that peace of mind you promise me there; — but am I then really going thither? Is it true, that I am just setting out!

Good

Good heavens!—Expect to be witness of a thousand absurdities, regrets, caprices; do not however upbraid me for them, in making yourself master of a secret, which I would fain have concealed from you. You have contracted an obligation, to bear with all my follies.

My mother and Miss Lesley are ignorant of the design I have formed—they shall remain so—the efforts of generosity, and the solicitudes of maternal tenderness, would too powerfully affect me.

They imagine that I am going to Lord Arundel's, for a few days.

Miss Lesley intends leaving Claremont next week, and going to Lord Merton's till the return of her friend, Mrs. Elvin.

My journey, however, will render this step unnecessary. Emily shall still remain here, in the bosom of security and friendship.

Lord

Lord Townly, the nephew of Lord Merton, is lately returned from abroad, and at present at the hall; what might not Miss Lesley have to fear from a man, who is devoid of every sentiment of honour?

* * * * *

'Tis over, Beauchamp—I have taken a long farewell of what is dearer to me than life.—I am going to leave her—perhaps for ever.—The thought is madness! ye stoicks, who deride that tenderness ye never felt, give me your indifference, and teach me to be happy.

Emily was surprised at the violence of those emotions, which agitated my soul, when I took leave of her this evening; I seized her hand, and pressed it to my bosom.—I could not speak—she blushed—my mother regarded me with tender anxiety—could they have foreseen—a last adieu!—But if some more fortunate man should, in my absence, obtain that heart, for which I

so

138 LETTERS.

so vainly sigh —No, I would fly from the farthest corner of the earth—yet what right have I to interpose, miserable wretch that I am !

I am interrupted—William enters my apartment, he waits for my orders about the journey—alas, I have none to give him—he regards me with astonishment—my despair, my inattention.—Farewel ! your wishes will shortly be gratified ; I am hastening to your friendly arms.—Oh ! that I could recover there that tranquillity which has long forsaken my wretched mind !

Adieu.

L E T .

LETTER CLVI.

Miss LESLEY to Mrs. ELVIN.

GOOD heavens! my dear friend, what a step has Sir Edward taken!—That visit to Lord Arundel's was only a pretence—alas! he is by this time arrived at Paris.

It is I who am the cause of his wretchedness; for my sake he is become a wanderer.

He could not support the thoughts of my leaving Claremont;—my departure would, he says, have been attended with inconveniences from which his is exempt.

My presence will console Lady Fortescue for his absence; she would only have been witness of his distress, without having it in her

her power power to relieve it. To the miserable all places are alike ; happiness is to be found every where, or no where. — He conjures her not to think of his return, since it is the only point in which he cannot obey her.

He concludes his letter with the most affecting address to your Emily. — He begs for my esteem—my compassion—dear and amiable Fortescue ! these sighs—these perturbations.— You, my beloved Clarissa, who know the sensibility of my soul, may judge what effects such hopeless tenderness, such generosity—must produce in my mind.

These scenes have recalled to my view, that fatal time—when my too susceptible heart was sinking under the woes of hopeless love ; when I experienced that despair—that regret, which now agitate his bosom—I must lay aside my pen.

My

L E T T E R S. 44

My journey to the hall is now become unnecessary. I have written to Lady Frances to apologize for my absence.

Adieu! my dear Clarissa; may your happiness meet with no interruptions.

EMILY LESLEY.

L E T T E R CLVII.

Miss SYDNEY to Miss FREELOVE.

I Am truly concerned to hear my uncle is indisposed with the gout; but you must excuse my adding, that I cannot think your situation so pitiable, as you represent it; surely the consciousness of having done your duty will be a sufficient reward, for any inconveniences that can attend it.

The

342 LETTERS.

The time may come, when you will require those attentions, which are now due from you to others.

Did we but allow ourselves to look into futurity, we should better perform the obligations of the present moment.— May you, Charlotte, never feel the pangs of repentance, for duties unfulfilled, when no atonement can be offered; rather, much rather sacrifice all those pleasures, which are dear to a youthful heart. — A truce with your reflections, dear Harriet, methinks you say; I wanted *consolation*, and you give me only *advice*—forgive my impertinence, and I will change the subject.

O! who do you think I met last week at Mr. York's?—No other than Miss Lesley—the lovely, the amiable Emily Lesley, whose character has so charmed me.

Lady C—— is dangerously ill; Lady Fortescue (who is a distant relation of her's) was sent for immediately; her Ladyship did

L E T T E R S. 143.

did not chuse to leave Miss Lesley alone at Claremont ; she therefore brought her to town, and consigned her to the care of her niece, Mrs. Yorke.

Mr. Beverly dined with us yesterday ; he frequently calls in upon us, and his company is always agreeable—I think he is no favourite of your's, Charlotte—I wonder what you can see in him to dislike—for my part—what's here ? A letter — and from Lady Offory.

Sir Charles and Lady Royston are this moment arrived, and I must fly to welcome them to town. Adieu !

HARRIET SYDNEY.

L E T-

144 LETTERS.

LETTER CLVIII.

MISS LESLEY TO MRS. ELVIN.

I Have been in London this fortnight, and am uncertain when I shall return to Claremont.

Lady C——'s disorder terminated in the gout, with which she is confined to her bed ; Lady Fortescue seldom leaves her, but Mrs. Yorke is so obliging to me, that my time is spent very agreeably.

She has already carried me to some of the public places ; to-night I am to attend her to the play, as Garrick is to perform. I will not write any further till my return ; I may then have some entertaining subjects for my pen ; adieu, therefore for the present.

My

My dear Clarissa, what a surprise have I this evening sustained! — a rencounter so unexpected—I have seen Sir Charles — saw him at the play with Lady Royston.

What a number of painful ideas did his first appearance excite in my mind! never did he look so handsome—happiness, my dear friend, is the best cosmetic; it gives a brilliancy to the eyes, and a freedom to the whole deportment, that renders it doubly engaging.

The house was so extremely full, that we could only get places in the back seat of one of the side boxes, and as I had a hat on, there was little probability of Sir Charles's discovering me.

He was indeed too much engaged with Lady Royston, to attend to any thing else; with what tenderness did he address her!—

she attracted universal admiration. The elegance of her form, the thousand graces —ah! my dear, what presumption in your Emily, to think of rivalling such a woman! But all is now over—their present felicity is too great to admit of any painful retrospections. Amiable pair! well do you deserve that happiness you now enjoy; may it meet with no interruptions!

Adieu, my dearest friend! it is late, and Mrs. Yorke is entering my apartment; I must therefore bid you hastily farewell.

EMILY LESLEY.

LET.

H. — H. YORKE

bed or inguoid need any Olyvya
el sherdif er) has ; and a to close
-xed as Now as Lanofoe's
ousterie occisione,

LETTER CLIX.

* * * Miss SYDNEY to Miss FREELOVE.

you good day will come
when I will write again

I Am glad to find, by the raillery which
is interspersed throughout your last let-
ter, that you have recovered your spirits ;
and hope it is a sign of my uncle's amend-
ment.

You may be mistaken, Charlotte, in
your suppositions respecting Mr. Beverly.

I acknowledge that I think him very
agreeable—but what then ? Must it neces-
sarily follow that I am in love with him ?
uncertain too as I am of his sentiments.
Love, they say, produces love—if it should
come to that—but enough upon this sub-
ject, whilst there are any *ifs* in the case.

THE

H 2

Lady

148 LETTERS.

Lady Ossory has been brought to bed this week of a son; and, (as the phrase is on these occasions,) as well as can be expected.

Sir Charles is obliged to go into * * next week; Lord Ossory will accompany him—Lady Royston remains with Lady Ossory.

My grandmother writes to my uncle. I have therefore nothing more to add than the assurance of my being,

Your's sincerely,

HARRIET SYDNEY.

LET-

LETTER CLX.

Lady OSSORY to Lord OSSORY.

I Must, and will write—am I not as well as ever ? these foolish women—the nurses I mean, think it a privilege of their office to be impertinent. Has not my Ossory been absent more than a week, and will he not be detained some time longer? —have I not received one, two, three letters from him, and shall they remain unanswered? No, no, it must not be.

I am writing 'close to the bedside, where our dear Charles lies fast asleep : sweet little innocent ! How balmy, how tranquil thy slumbers ! no cares interrupt thy repose ; in thy bosom all is peace—ah ! may it ever be so ! may goodness ever inhabit there, and mayest thou, with the dear name of Ossory, inherit all thy father's virtues !

H 3

Lady

Lady Royston is just returned from Lady Sydney's : she found Mr. Beverly alone with Harriet, the old Lady being absent.

They seemed earnest in discourse — perhaps he was making a discovery of that passion, with which, I am certain, she has inspired him—what an awkward situation ! How did you feel at that interesting period ? Very foolish, timid, &c. did you not ? Ah Ossory, where is that timidity gone to, I pray you ?

A tap at the door—it is Harriet—
come in child—now for it.

I was mistaken, I believe—for though I mentioned Mr. Beverly, and came with my roundabouts, and my suppositions, nothing escaped her; besides, she looked thoughtful; ah, Beverly! but most modest men (as they are called) are fools in these matters.

Every

TUESDAY

Tuesday.

Every doubt is satisfied—Beverly has declared his passion and is accepted;—well, after all, there is something joyous in these matters.

Now I can't imagine need

I am already attacking Harriet with Hudibrastics. My brother—but Charles summons me to the bedside, and will scarcely suffer me to add that I am ever,

Your and Sir Charles's affectionate, &c.
HENRIETTA OSSORY.

LETTER CLXI.

Miss LESLEY to Mrs. ELVIN.

WHAT interesting scenes have I been engaged in, since I wrote to you last! adventures the most singular—the most unexpected! —the recital will give you pleasure. I hasten to it, therefore, without any further preface.

About three weeks ago Mrs. Yorke proposed our going to Richmond, to spend a few days with her aunt, Mrs. Sedley.

The design was executed, almost as soon as formed. We were received by the old Lady, in the most obliging manner, and I rejoiced at my removal from those scenes of tumult and dissipation I had lately partaken of.

The next morning we took an airing to * *, and returned to dinner. Upon coming

ing home, we found that some company had arrived during our absence, by a genteel equipage, which drove away from the door just as we entered the coach-yard.

Mrs. Sedley upon seeing it, exclaimed eagerly, "I find Lady Royston has not forgot her promise of spending a day or two with me, during Sir Charles's absence, and I am particularly glad, that she is come at this time, as I shall now have an opportunity of introducing my dear niece to the acquaintance of that amiable woman." Judge, my beloved Clarissa, what I felt at that moment—to be thus unexpectedly hurried into the presence of one, whom I had never thought of without anxiety—but was it impossible to contrive some apology for not seeing her—how could I act—a thousand schemes—but I had not power to resolve upon any—in the mean time the coach stopt—the ladies alighted, and I followed, irresolute and trembling.

Mrs. Sedly hastily entered the parlour, where Lady Royston was—they embraced

Mrs. Yorke advanced towards them—I know not what passed—and my confusion increased, when Mrs. Sedley presented me to Lady Royston. At the name of Lesley, she started—“How, Madam! exclaimed she eagerly, Miss Lesley, did you say?—What an unexpected happiness!” So tender a reception abated my fears, and I was going to return the endearments she had lavished upon me, when the arrival of company put a stop to this interesting scene.

I soon after withdrew to my own apartment, where she in a few minutes joined me. How noble, how affectionate was her behaviour! Her goodness overcame every prejudice, as the dew melteth before the sun, and I embraced her with a tenderness which I was unable to express.

She returned with us to London; we became inseparable; and I look forward with apprehension, to Sir Charles's return, which would deprive me of the company of my invaluable friend. She regretted our separation—yet delicacy prevented our mentioning

mentioning to each other the situation of our hearts.

The dreaded time arrived—I saw not Lady Royston for some days, and I found that her presence was become essential to my happiness.

I accompanied Mrs. Yorke to an auction —and we had scarcely entered the room, when Lady Royston appeared, leaning upon Sir Charles's arm. I coloured—she perceived me, and seemed irresolute how to act. Her tenderness, and my diffidence, kept us at a distance from each other, till Mrs. Yorke advancing towards her, put an end to this restraint.

Sir Charles bowed to me with a respectful tenderness ; I returned the compliment ; the reserve insensibly vanished ; and I grew collected enough to give Mrs. Yorke my opinion of some things she went to purchase..

156 LETTERS.

As soon as we returned home, I retired to my own apartment to ruminate upon what had passed.

The period I had so long dreaded was over—I had seen—I had spoke to Sir Charles—and the trial had not been so severe as my apprehensions had represented it.

Pleased to find that I had conquered an attachment, which had so long disturbed the repose of my life—that I had subdued every selfish wish—every irregular desire—in my bosom all was serenity and peace.

The duties of this life are difficult only to those who are unwilling to exert themselves in the cause of virtue. “ Sloth and folly shiver and shrink at the sight of toil and hazard, and make the impossibility they fear.”

* * * * *

We

We are going to spend the day at Lady C——'s; she is better, but still confined to her room.

Lady Fortescue is uneasy at not having heard from Sir Edward lately: heaven preserve the life of that excellent man, and restore to him that happiness he so well deserves.

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Elvin! when may I expect to embrace you?

EMILY LESLEY.

LETTER CLXII.

Sir EDWARD FORTESCUE to Lady
FORTESCUE.

I have this moment received a letter from Lord Merton ; one part of it has greatly surprised me—He writes thus :—“ I am just returned from the play, where I saw my favourite Miss Lesley, who came with Sir Charles and Lady Royston ; she looked more beautiful than ever.”

What intelligence is this ! Miss Lesley in company with Sir Charles ! him she loved so tenderly ! — ah, does she not love him still ? — What imprudence ! — how ridiculous to seek that danger she might so easily have avoided ! Dear Madam, convince her of the impropriety of the connection ; your advice will be sufficient to put a stop to it — alas, why did you not interpose before ?

You

You complain of my silence—It was occasioned by the marriage of Miss Beauchamp, who is at last united to the amiable Mr. Lefevre.

The wedding was celebrated with the utmost magnificence—what transport appeared in every look and action of the happy bridegroom! what modesty and tender sweetness in the lovely bride! Ah! how exquisite are the delights of virtuous love! Ye tender sensations, ye will ever be a stranger to my heart—which is doomed to feel wishes, which can never be gratified—to despise where it ought to loye, and to love without hope.

Mr. Beauchamp desires to be respectfully remembered to you.

I am, dearest Madam, with the utmost affection, gratitude, and duty, your's,

EDWARD FORTESCUE.

LETTER CLXIII.

Lady FORTESCUE to Sir EDWARD
FORTESCUE.

YOUR fears are unnecessary, my dear Sir Edward—Emily's situation does not require them. It is true, that she has been frequently in company with Sir Charles Royston. I have narrowly watched her during these interviews—Emily is no hypocrite—the serenity which appears in her countenance, is derived from her heart. She esteems Sir Charles, greatly esteems him, but Lady Royston is, I am convinced, still dearer to her; nothing can be conceived more tender than the friendship which unites them.

Miss Lesley has been introduced to Lord and Lady Offory; she is charmed with them both. The dear creature has regained all her former cheerfulness; satisfied

with

L E T T E R S. 161

with her own conduct, and beloved by all around her, every past regret is forgotten.

I am going to Lady Sydney's this morning ; her niece was married yesterday to Mr. Beverly, and I am impatient to pay my respects to them.

Mrs. Yorke and Emily are to accompany me ;—I hear Miss Lesley's voice—Adieu, my dear son : amidst all these scenes of gaiety, your absence—but I must quit the subject.

Lady C—— is better, and will shortly attend me to Claremont. Once more adieu.

M. FORTESCUE.

L E T.

162 LETTERS.

With her own courage, and devoted
young heart, every letter is forgotten.

LETTER CLXIV.

Lord TOWNLY to Sir GEORGE MERTON.

I Should have regretted my leaving Merton-hall, before your arrival, had I not been convinced that the company of Lady Frances would amply console you for my absence.

Confess, my dear Sir George, that our cousin has her attractions, and that love, as well as friendship, detains you at the hall.

I left Lord Merton rather abruptly, upon his refusing to lend me a sum of money, which I wanted to discharge a debt of honour.

He proposed conditions, which no man of spirit would submit to—I resented his behaviour, and vowed never to see him more.

Fortune

Fortune has not favoured me lately; the jade generally forsakes us, at the time we most want her assistance—I must think of some scheme—suppose I marry, George? “It is the easiest method, you say, of repairing a shattered fortune.”—I doubt you are mistaken however, and that the remedy would be worse than the disease—the pill is bitter—but if it be well gilded—who cares?

I have renewed my acquaintance with Lady Bab Dormer; not that I have any designs upon her Ladyship, (these widows are generally too cunning for us) but for the sake of her friend, Charlotte Freelove.

The girl came to town with her uncle, in order to be present at Miss Sydney’s marriage, and is gone with the bride and bridegroom into Essex.

Lady Dormer had a letter from her last week. I happened to be present with her Ladyship, when she received it, and accidentally saw my name mentioned in the

postscript—my curiosity was excited—I tried several schemes to get a sight of the letter—and at last (I will not tell you by what means) succeeded in my attempts.

She tells Lady Dorner, that she fears their separation will be for a much longer period than they expected, as her uncle (who has been some time indisposed) is now very ill; and the physicians think him in danger.

If the old don should tip off—I think I need not despair of succeeding with the girl, as her letter to Lady Bab, plainly shews that I am not indifferent to her.

Farewell! present my compliments to Lady Frances, and believe me, your's,

TOWNLY.

L E T -

LETTER CLXV.

Miss FREELOVE to Lady DORMER.

DO you then really believe, that Lord Townly does not behold your Charlotte with indifference? His rank — but away with these suggestions — at this time they surely ought not to intrude.

My uncle, my dear, is very bad; the physicians think it impossible he should live through the night. Oh death, how dreadful are thy approaches! yet, in a few years, we also shall fall a sacrifice—I gasp at the thought—an icy coldness runs through my veins—forgive me for thus communicating the sad reflections that have taken possession of my soul.

* * * * *

4

My

Three o'clock.

My uncle has just now breathed his last. Harriet and my grandmother are weeping, Mr. Beverly with tender sensibility comforting both: for my part I have not yet shed a tear. Farewel.

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

L E T T E R CLXVI.

Lady FORTESCUE to Sir EDWARD
FORTESCUE.

I Am just returned from paying a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Elvin, who arrived in London two days ago. Miss Leyley is with them, and has consented to remain with her dear friend this winter.

I am

M

I am going to Claremont in a few days ;
Lady C—— attends me ; we propose re-
turning again to town before Christmas, as
the country at that season is rather dis-
agreeable.

Mrs. Yorke, who was to have accom-
panied us to the old mansion-house (which
she has not visited since her infancy) has
given us the slip, and set off yesterday with
Lord and Lady W——, for Bath.

We have had a great deal of company
to-day at Lady C——'s. Lord and Lady
Offory, Sir Charles Royston and his ami-
able wife, Mr. and Mrs. Elvin, &c. &c.
Never were hours spent more agreeably ;
yet how often did my wishes for your
presence—My dear Edward, thy affec-
tionate mother longs to embrace thee ;
and must she still be denied that pleasure ?

Adieu,

Adieu, my beloved son. Lady C—
has sent for me to play a game at picquet
with her, and I must therefore leave you
abruptly.

M. FORTESCUE.

LETTER CLXVII.

From the Same.

I Have this moment received the inclosed
letter from Mr. Freeman. Unhappy
Lady Lucy!—at such a time every emo-
tion is lost in pity.

Fly, my dear Edward, I conjure you, to
her assistance—your forgiveness will render
the approaching trial more supportable.

I can add no more, than that I am your
most affectionate,

M. F.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Mr. FREEMAN, to Lady FORTESCUE,
Inclosed in the preceding Letter.

WERE I not well convinced of the goodness of your Ladyship's disposition, I should not have taken the liberty of addressing you, in behalf of an unfortunate woman, whose past life has hitherto rendered her undeserving your attention.

But, alas! Madam, the situation of the wretched Lucy calls for compassion, no resentment!—a violent fever will shortly terminate her existence, and your anger extends not to the grave.

Could your Ladyship behold this unhappy creature, emaciated by sickness, distracted with remorse, in every interval of recollection, calling for her “injured

VOL. II. I husband,”

husband," wishing "to implore a last forgiveness"—and will Sir Edward—may we dare to hope that he will listen to our intreaties? to the prayers of his dying wife?

Would you, Madam, kindly intercede—but it is injustice to Sir Edward to suppose him capable of a refusal!

I will, therefore, beg the favour of you to forward this letter immediately, as I know not where to direct to him.

I remain your Ladyship's

Obedient servant,

J. FREEMAN.

L E T.

LETTRE CLXIX.

Sir EDWARD FORTESCUE to Lady
FORTESCUE.

London.

YES, Madam, I have seen the unhappy Lucy, and the interview has cost me many tears! Good heavens, how unnecessary were her apprehensions! was it possible to behold her unmoved?

She knew me not when I first entered her apartment, yet surveyed me with attention; I took her hand, her clay-cold hand—her senses returned—she recollected me, and shrinking under the bed cloaths, exclaimed faintly, “It is Sir Edward!—it is, it is my husband! hide me, hide me from him, cover me up—for ever.” “It is indeed your husband, returned I, whom you behold—but he comes to declare his compassion, his forgiveness.”—“Impos-

sible, rejoined she, I cannot dare not expect it—my crimes are too great—too numerous—yet I go to alone for all?" — here she fainted, and it was some moments before she recovered her senses. I withdrew soon after, finding that my presence added to her agitations: I have promised to see her again in the afternoon.

I found Lady Lucy more composed this evening, though much weaker, and her breath greatly affected.

Mr. Freeman withdrew soon after I entered the chamber, and left us together; she then, in the most earnest terms, implored my forgiveness of her past misconduct, which I as sincerely granted, but said, —“remember, Lucy, that there is a Being, whose forgiveness is far more necessary than mine.” “Ah Sir Edward, exclaimed she hastily, shall I dare to cast my guilty eyes to heaven with hopes of mercy? I, who

who have disobeyed its most sacred laws, and have known virtue only to despise it? No, no, I cannot look forward—I have nothing to hope for—annihilation would be heaven to a wretch like me!" "That your offences have been great, I confess, returned I, but despair is no less sinful, than presumption. Heaven is won by penitence; the Deity will not despise a contrite heart." "Alas! rejoined she, can a few hours of sorrow atone for years of guilt!—No—it would be mockery!" "If the penitence is sincere, interrupted I, and your protracted life would have been devoted to the performance of those duties, the neglect of which you seem to lament; the Deity, we humbly trust, will accept the pious intention." "Ah! may I dare to hope so, exclaimed she hastily; father of mercies," clasping her hands together, and lifting up her eyes to heaven—the emotion was too powerful for her delicate frame to sustain—and she fainted on my bosom.

* * * * *

Mr. FREEMAN in continuation.

Wednesday.

Sir Edward being rather indisposed with his late fatigues, I have prevailed upon him to try to get a few hours rest.

Lady Lucy is much worse this morning. She cannot speak; but her dying eyes are frequently cast up to heaven with fervor—her lips move—she seems to pray for forgiveness—may her prayers be effectual!

I am called—she is gone for ever—that sigh was the last struggle of expiring nature. Unhappy woman! thus in the bloom of life—my tears force me to conclude.

Sir Edward desires me to present his affectionate respects.

I remain your Ladyship's

Obedient servant,

J. FREEMAN.

LETTER CLXX.

Miss FREELOVE to Lady DORMER.

WEIL, my dear Lady Bab, I am preparing to attend you in town, notwithstanding the grave remonstrances of Lady Sydney, and the saucy rebukes of the philosophical Harriet. Difficulty, they say, endears conquest. — Such harangues! — I will give you one of them, which passed yesterday, between my cousin and your Charlotte—she begins, “ I am sorry to find that you are determined to leave Essex. — After the affecting loss you have so recently sustained, I should have imagined that this place would have been more agreeable to you than London; but you seem to have forgot.— Lord, my dear, would you have me waste the bloom of life, in fruitless tears! — It is both inconsistent with christianity and good sense, as I thought

you must know, to grieve for an irremediable misfortune. The cause removed, the effect ceases.—Besides, it is time to think of myself—mistress of a large and independent fortune—do not boast of a circumstance, Charlotte, which, I greatly fear, you will one day have cause to lament!—I thank you, my dear, with a low curtsey, for your good opinion of me—but I desire, child, that you would not be too apprehensive upon my account.—You are only to be answerable for your own faults, you know.”—This concluded the debate, and we part—with mutual dissatisfaction.

Mr. Beverly will escort me to London—He is to remain there some days; how can Harriet ever support this separation!—“They will count the tedious moments as they pass.”—soft souls, how I despise both them and their enjoyments!

Adieu, dear Lady Bab! I am impatient for the arrival of that time, which will allow me to assure you personally how much I am ever your's,

CHARLOTTE FREELOVE.

LETTER CLXXI.

LORD TOWNLY TO SIR GEORGE MERTON.

MISS Freelo^e has been in town this week, and I am her constant attendant; She seems pleased with my affiduities, but this circumstance does not flatter my vanity, since I am convinced, that to my rank alone I owe the distinction—" and is such a heart as her's, you will say, worth obtaining?" Pshaw! it is her *fortune* I want—nor do I value the one, only as it will serve to put me in possession of the other. You whining enamoratos, think there is nothing to be done in these cases, without such a profusion of love—but girls of spirit despise your tame, submissive, dying swains, whilst an easy degagée, careless fellow—like your Townly—has in their eyes a thousand attractions.

Miss Freelo^e and Lady Dormer dined with me yesterday in —— square: my

I. 5. house

house is finished—such encomiums were passed upon it; “My Lord, you have really the most exquisite taste—these pictures—and then those decorations are inimitable!—if I am so happy as to gain Miss Freelo's approbation!”—Then followed a tender sigh, and a look which spoke more than words could have done.—Oh woman, woman, how easily art thou deceived!—*A propos*, how go you on with Lady Frances? Must I intercede for thee, or is thy own eloquence sufficient? Adieu.

TOWNLY.

LET.

house in town—such encounters were
now about it. My poor son was
very ill from exposure—indeed he
LETTER CLXXII.

**Sir EDWARD FORTESCUE to Mr.
BEAUCHAMP.**

I left London a few days ago after the
interment of the unhappy Lady Lucy.
Miss Lesley is gone for some weeks, with her
friend Mrs. Elvin, to Sir John Essex's seat
in W——shire, so that I had no induce-
ment to remain any longer absent from
Claremont. Yet this spot, once so delight-
ful to me, does not now satisfy my wishes
— my present suspense — but might not
certainty be more insupportable? have I
any reason to think Miss Lesley will receive
my addresses? — disappointed in her first at-
tachment — an attachment so tender, so ar-
dent — how often has she declared against
entering into a second engagement? I am
impatient to know my fate; yet I must re-
strain

strain these impatient wishes; my present situation will not suffer me to act as love directs. Emily is delicacy itself, and might not easily forgive a breach of decorum, though my regard for her was the occasion of it.

Lady Fortescue wrote to Miss Lesley yesterday, and she allowed me to add a few lines to her letter. I could not be easy till I had informed her, how eagerly I longed for the arrival of that time, which would allow me to declare the tender sentiments of a heart that is wholly her's.

I set off on Monday for my estate in G—, where I intend spending a few weeks; my presence has long been wanted there, and as my mother is now free from every engagement, she has kindly consented to accompany me.

Present my best respects to your amiable family, and believe me your's,

EDWARD FORTESCUE.

LETTER CLXXII.

Lord TOWNLY to Sir GEORGE MERTON.

I Have declared my passion to Miss Freelo-
ve, and have no reason to despair of
success—but my diffidence—a new qualifi-
cation this in thy friend.—Could I not af-
sume the appearance of virtue, when it
suited my purpose, I should not have
made the havock I have done amongst
these girls. But to return from this digres-
sion—the manner in which Miss Freelo-
ve received the avowal of my passion, convinc-
ed me, that it was neither unexpected, nor
undesired. She regarded me with a ten-
derness of which I believed her incapable,
while I poured forth all the soft—nonsense
that is generally used by us lovers, upon
such an occasion.—When suddenly, assum-
ing an air of dejection, I let go the hand
which I had hitherto held in mine—she was
surprised,

182 LETTERS.

surprised, and eagerly inquired the cause of that melancholy which was imprinted on my countenance. " Ah Miss Freeloove, returned I, with a deep sigh, have I not reason to be miserable, when I recollect the obstacles that may arise to prevent the gratification of my wishes?"

" Your relations are incensed against me ; my youthful follies are not unknown to them ; and though so sincerely repented of, yet alas ! they will never be forgotten ! their advice—their intreaties will prevail, and notwithstanding my rank and fortune, I shall be rejected and unhappy."

" I will not deny, replied she, that your suspicions, in regard to the sentiments of my friends, are but too well founded—but you may be mistaken in the conclusion you seem to draw from thence—I am at liberty to act as choice directs, and shall determine accordingly."

" There's a girl of spirit for you, George ! It is a fortunate circumstance for me before matrimony,

matrimony, but afterwards I may not find it so convenient. Let us, however, enjoy the present, and leave futurity to take care of itself—sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof—you see I can quote scripture when it suits my purpose.—I cannot say however that this is frequently the case. Adieu.

LETTER CLXXIV.

Mrs. BEVERLY to Miss FREELOVE.

IS it possible, Charlotte, that you can encourage the addresses of Lord Townly? What imprudence!—“Repent of his past misconduct, you say?” Ah, my dear, trust not to his professions; had his errors been the effects of youthful levity, or considerate rashness, there would have been some hopes of his reformation; but how difficult —how impossible, I might almost say, to reclaim a heart, which has long gloried in such premeditated crimes!

From

From whence arises the amendment of which he boasts?—O! it is love, it seems, which has produced the mighty change—I believe it not, Charlotte, he is incapable of so exalted a passion,—Love can only take root in virtuous minds.—It is your fortune, which alone makes you desirable in his eyes; it is his rank, which renders him respectable in yours—but know, Charlotte, that nobility, when unaccompanied by virtue, only serves to render its possessor more detestable.

Return then, my dear cousin, to your tender, your real friends; not precipitately enter into engagements which are indissoluble.

If grandeur is necessary to your happiness, you possess the means of acquiring it.

Your fortune, your accomplishments, entitle you to expect a rank as elevated as that Lord Townly would raise you to.

Adieu,

"Adieu, my dear Charlotte ! my grandmother has read my letter, and desires me to tell you that her sentiments coincide with those of your ever affectionate

HARRIET BEVERLY.

LETTER CLXXXV.

From the Same.

"GONE to Bath with Lady Dormer, and it is uncertain when you return"—Lord Townly without doubt of the party—inconsiderate Charlotte ! but remonstrances are vain.

I have not shewn your letter to Lady Sydney, as it would only have increased her displeasure.—How could you, Charlotte, bestow two whole sides upon matters so uninteresting, and yet devote only one solitary line to the subject which alone deserved your attention ?

You

You are no stranger to Lord Townly's behaviour in regard to Mrs. Wilmot—Is it possible that any remains of honour can dwell in such a heart!

I expect to hear from you soon, and in a different stile.

HARRIET BEVERLY.

LETTER CLXXVI.

Lady TOWNLY to Mrs. BEVERLY.

YOU reason well, Harriet, I allow ; but love, all-conquering love—in short, my dear, your letter came too late—I had consented to give my hand to Lord Townly, and this very morning we were—married.

A hasty step, you will say, and so indeed it was ; but his Lordship was so impatient !

Lady

Lady Dormer has undertaken to send to town for patterns, &c. &c.—These widows dearly love to be busied in such matters; she is become so important! I verily believe it was the chief reason of her being so desirous of my marriage,—but am I really commenced wife, and is the connections indissoluble? Good Heavens! my dear, if I should, as you say, repent—I hope you will not be a true prophetess, Harriet:—So—what's the matter, Jenny? —the girl looks as demure as if she too had been married this morning—“ My Lord, Madam, begs the favour of your company.” I come, I come.

Adieu, child! you must forgive me, and intercede for me with Lady Sydney. Compliments to your good man.

CHARLOTTE TOWNLY.

LET-

LETTER CLXXVII.

Sir EDWARD FORTESCUE to Mr.
BEAUCHAMP.

THE important time will soon arrive,
that is to determine the fate of your
friend! Miss Lessley is returned from Sir
John Essex's; I shall consequently set off
for London one day this week. Lady
Fortescue will soon follow me to town, as
Claremont is not agreeable to her at this
season of the year.

Oh, Beauchamp! how great are my agi-
tations at this interesting period! Hope, and
fear, alternately take possession of my soul,
If Emily should refuse my offered love,
—I tremble at the idea, yet, alas! is it not
too probable? Surely, however, the per-
suasions of Mrs. Elvin, (who is my friend
as well as her's) and the tender remon-
strances of my excellent parent, cannot
prove

LETTERS. 189

prove ineffectual—but I will not owe my happiness entirely to their intercessions.

Adieu, my dear Beauchamp! and believe me (as much as I can possibly be at such a juncture)

Your's,

EDWARD FORTESCUE.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

Mrs. ELVIN to Lady ESSEX.

YOUR Ladyship seemed to have conceived such a friendship for Miss Lessley, during our late happy visit at Rose Park, that I am certain you would like to be acquainted with every circumstance which relates to that amiable girl.

This morning, as we were sitting at breakfast, the servant entered with a letter for Miss Lessley. Emily blushed upon seeing

ing that it came from Sir Edward Fortescue. She perused it with the utmost attention; an air of melancholy took possession of her sweet features—“ Ah ! my dear friend, exclaimed she at last, holding the letter towards me, what does Sir Edward say ? —His future happiness or misery intirely depending upon me—I determine his fate ! Good Heavens ! ” —“ Why these agitations, my dear ? interrupted I ; is the love of so amiable a man such a misfortune ? ” “ Not if I could return it,” rejoined she hastily. “ And why can you not do so ? —Ah ! Emily, I fear the remembrance of your former attachment is still too dear to your heart.” “ You are mistaken, returned she, in the sentiments I entertain of Sir Charles ; they are not more tender than those I feel for Sir Edward. I esteem them, greatly esteem them both—they are both truly amiable ;—but my heart has bid a final adieu to love ; friendship wholly engrosses it, and satisfies all my wishes.” “ I do not desire you to be less susceptible of friendship, rejoined I, marriage has made no alteration in my regard towards

you,

you, why then should it lessen yours?—Love your friends, my dear Emily; love them as tenderly as ever; but not to the exclusion of every other attachment."

" But as I am happy in my present situation, returned she, why should I think of altering it, since I cannot hope to gain any thing by the exchange?" "Would it be nothing to confer felicity upon such a man as Sir Edward?—to be able to gratify the tender wishes of Lady Fortescue? I rejoice in your present happiness, but I would have it more secure! life, in my situation, is doubly uncertain—nay, do not weep, my beloved Emily, we are looking forward to an event, which may not happen,—yet as it may, is it not prudent to guard against it?—Should we be separated, where would my Emily find an asylum?—In case you rejected Sir Edward, it could not be with Lady Fortescue—with Lady Royston it would be still more improper. The world will judge by appearances; your refusal of Sir Edward will be imputed to your love of Sir Charles; and, notwithstanding

withstanding your innocence, you ought not to disregard its censures.—On the other hand, consider the advantages that would attend your union with Sir Edward—the affiduities of an amiable husband—the maternal tenderness of Lady Fortescue; rank, fortune, all conspire to complete your felicity.” “The rank and fortune of Sir Edward, returned she, are reasons why I ought not to accept his addresses; if he is generous enough to overlook my inferiority in those respects, I ought not to forget it.” “Away with this disinterestedness, exclaimed I, it is here unnecessary.—Tell me, child, are not riches valuable, only as they bestow upon us the means of acquiring happiness? You know Sir Edward’s sentiments—do you draw the conclusion?” “But you would not have me consent to receive Sir Edward as a lover, before I know whether it is possible for me to return his affection?” “I will answer for the possibility of it, nay probability of it; the heart soon assimilates itself to every situation. You have hitherto beheld Sir Edward only as a friend; but his tenderness

ness will soon inspire you with sentiments of a different nature. I will only mention one argument more. Since the death of your excellent parent, it has been your study to act in every circumstance, as you imagined he, if living, would have approved. You know how greatly he esteemed Sir Edward; and we can both of us easily determine, I believe, what his wishes in this case would have been—and will my Emily—she was softened—a gentle sigh, —I am interrupted—Lady Fortescue is this moment arrived, and I hasten to attend her.

Wednesday.

The presence of this amiable woman has been attended with the most desirable effect. Miss Lessley could not resist her tender eloquence; she consented to see Sir Edward; and he had no reason to be dissatisfied with his visit. I told him at

194 LETTERS.

parting, that I should expect to see him again to-morrow; he bowed compliance.

Adieu, my dear sister. Present my best compliments to Sir John, and believe me

Your's,

CLARISSA ELVIN.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

Mrs. BEVERLY to Lady TOWNLY.

YOUR letter afflicted, more than it surprized me. I was too well acquainted with your sentiments, and the artifices of Lord Townly, to imagine, that you would act conformably to my wishes. I fear, Charlotte, you will one day be convinced, that even grandeur may be purchased at too high a price. But alas! what would your repentance avail, now the deed is irrevocably done? It would only serve

serve to render you negligent of those duties, which you have so solemnly vowed to perform.

You have entered into engagements the most sacred, contrary to the united desires of your friends. You have despised their advice, and disregarded their intreaties. Should the event, therefore, be answerable to their fears, you can have no right to expect their compassion, though you may still entitle yourself to their esteem.

You are now in a situation wherein every step becomes of importance. Study the disposition of your husband—sacrifice every thing to the pleasure of obliging him, when his wishes do not interfere with your superior duties. If this conduct should not be attended with the desired effect, you will still have the satisfaction of reflecting, that you have sought for happiness only in the paths of virtue.

Lady Sydney bids me tell you, that you can only hope to regain her favour by the propriety of your future behaviour; on that you must also depend for the continuance of my friendship.

HARRIET BEVERLY.

LETTER EIGHTY CLXXX.

Lord TOWNLY to Sir GEORGE MERTON.

WHAT a romantic picture have you drawn of matrimonial happiness! If such are your notions, I wonder not at your reflections upon my conduct. But what says my fair cousin to your scheme? Or have you been wise enough not to divulge them? Lady Frances is a girl of spirit; she loves pleasure, and hates restraint—my notions exactly, and happily Lady Townly's.

Yours,

A

We

We pass whole days without even seeing each other. We meet without emotion, and separate without regret. She interferes not with my pursuits, and I am equally inattentive to hers. Politeness supplies the place of tenderness, and we enjoy that happiness asunder, which we could never have experienced in the company of each other. Lady Townly, without being a beauty, has a vivacity, a *je ne sais quoi* in her manner, which generally pleases our sex, and has gained her many admirers. Sir Harry Sinclay, and Lord Darnley are the most assiduous. "My dear Townly, said the latter yesterday at White's, you are the happiest fellow!—Lady Townly is an enchanting creature! such wit, such beauty!" "Pardon me, my Lord, returned I, bowing—your encomiums—but does your Lordship really think her handsome? For my part—but, for Heaven's sake, (yawning) let us change the subject: I make it a rule never to think of my wife when I am absent from her."

Lady Dormer is still at Bath. She is in love with a young officer, (who doubtless finds great attractions in her Ladyship's jointure) and has written to Lady Townly to know how she shall act in the affair. A good sign that for the lover; these women seldom ask for advice until they are determined to follow their own inclinations. I wish I was near Captain Percy, to give him a hint or two upon the occasion; he could not fail of success, if under the directions of thy

TOWNLY

LET-

LETTER CLXXXI.

Lady TOWNLY to Lady DORMER:

NO, no, I do not expect to see your Ladyship in town whilst Captain Percy remains at Bath—but is he really so handsome, so engaging? What a pity it is, that fortune should have been less liberal to him than nature! But your Ladyship is become indifferent to those advantages you once so highly esteemed. This love is a horrid passion. I thank my stars, that I never experienced its influence; had I done so, instead of the gay, the fashionable Lady Townly, I might have been only the obscure wife of some country Parson, or rustic 'Squire. *A propos*; I saw Mr. and Mrs. Elvin at the play last night. Your Charlotte was blazing with jewels, and surrounded by her titled adorers; yet the insensible creatures beheld my

exaltation without emotion, and Mrs. Elvin seemed to enjoy more happiness in the company of her husband, than I received from the adulation of my numberless admirers. Lord Darnly was in our box, and I observed that his eyes were fixed upon Miss Lessley, who accompanied her friend; but Emily was too much engaged with Sir Edward Fortescue, who sat next her, to attend to his Lordship.

Lord Darnly has sent up his name—
he enters the room—the impudent creature was scarcely seated, before he began talking about Miss Lessly—he asks me a thousand questions concerning her—“positively, my Lord, I shall continue writing, unless you will chuse some more agreeable subject.”—He bows—and I throw aside my pen. Adieu,

C. TOWNLY.

LET-

X

LETTER CLXXXII.

Mrs. ELVIN to Lady ESSEX.

MY late silence has been occasioned by an indisposition, which being now happily removed, I with pleasure continue a correspondence, that constitutes one of the greatest pleasures of my life.

We have had few visitors since my confinement, except Lady Fortescue and Sir Edward. Every day, by discovering new perfections in that amiable man, renders him still dearer to the gentle heart of my beloved Emily.

The death of a distant relation, to whom Sir Edward is left executor, has obliged him to leave us for a few days. I with pleasure perceived the change, which his absence made in my friend. She became

pensive and unsettled ; yet seemed insensible of the cause of this sudden alteration. But we generally chuse to assign some reason for our dejection, when we find it is observed by others. " This weather, said she to me, (yawning) is intolerable ; it really affects my spirits ; I don't believe the sun has shone" — " ever since Sir Edward's absence, interrupted I, with a smile, — were he here, the sky would lowr, the seasons change in vain,

" Not even dull December sad,
" If he stood smiling by."

Emily has been with Lady Fortescue these two days, and is to remain there until the return of Sir Edward, when the day is to be fixed which will render him the happiest of mankind.

I forgot to tell you, that Sir Charles Royston, and Sir Edward, had met frequently lately in Berkley-square, and seemed highly pleased with each other. I was present at their first interview, which fortunately

tunately happened to be when Emily was gone to pay a morning visit at Lady Offory's.

Upon Mr. Elvin's introducing Sir Charles to him, Sir Edward involuntarily started back, and it was some moments before he could pay his compliments to him. Soon, however, did Sir Charles, by his winning address, and amiable conduct, overcome every unfavourable impression. Sir Edward saw, he admired his virtues, and loved him the more, for his having, 'till then, withheld from him that esteem, of which he found he had ever been so deserving.

* * * * *

I have this moment received a note from Lady Fortescue. Sir Edward arrived last night in Grosvenor-square, and on Friday se'nnight my beloved Emily is to be united to that amiable man. I fly to congratulate them upon this pleasing event.

Adieu, adieu!

CLARISSA ELVIN.

L. E T-

LETTER CLXXXIII.

LADY TOWNLY to LADY DORMER.

SIR Harry Sinclay, and Lord Darnley, have just left me.—We have been maligning his Lordship most unmercifully. Miss Lessley, the “enchanting Miss Lessley,” was married last week to Sir Edward Fortescue. The Peer had entertained hopes of supplanting him—no improbable conjecture that, let me tell you, had the girl been as ambitious as thy Charlotte.

Passing by Mr. Beverly’s house in Bruton-street, one morning last week, I saw my cousin Harriet standing near the window—I pulled the string—the coach stopped—John rapped with authority at the door—and my Ladyship entered the parlour,
where

THE

where Mrs. Beverly was, but, thank Heaven, no Lady Sydney, the old dowager being not yet arrived in town. Harriet was in full dress, and never looked to greater advantage. She was going to spend the day at Mr. Elvin's, to meet Sir Edward Fortescue and his bride, Sir Charles, and Lady Royston, &c. and, her chariot driving to the door, she agreed to call upon me the next morning, Lord Townly being gone into Sussex.

I went in the evening to Lady R—'s rout, lost an immensity, and returned at three o'clock, fatigued and out of humour—and having vented my spleen upon my maid, retired to bed. Harriet was at — square by twelve the next morning. She waited near an hour, but no Lady Townly appeared. At two, however, I awoke, recollecting the appointment, rung for Jenny, and having hurried on my cloaths, hastened to attend her in the drawing room. "I hope, Lady Townly, said she, as soon as I entered, that this is not your

your usual time of rising—Good heavens, my dear, continued she, how pale you look! That bloom, which once gave such animation to your features, is entirely fled.

Let me prevail upon you, Charlotte”——

“ You *country* ladies, interrupted I, perversely, imagine that the whole of beauty consists in that rustic bloom, of which you boast so highly; whereas it is utterly exploded the *beau monde*, as the most unfashionable thing in nature. Why, child, that colour in your cheeks, which you, I suppose, esteem your greatest attraction, would utterly ruin me for a fine lady.”

“ It is polite, returned she smiling, to decry those qualifications we do not possess—but I must own, if the appellation of a fine lady is to be bought at so dear a price, I shall never be tempted to become a pur-chaser.”

Adieu, my dear Lady Bab! Compli-
ments to Captain Percy, from your

CHARLOTTE TOWNLY.

LET-

LETTER CLXXXIV.

SIR EDWARD FORTESCUE to MR.
BEAUCHAMP.

MY dear Beauchamp, I am indeed the happiest of men. My Emily—but no words can describe her perfections, or my love. The gentleness of her manners, the delicacy of her sentiments, and the softness which beams forth from her lovely eyes, whenever I address her—and am I then the object of this tenderness! yes, my friend, every look, every action of Lady Fortescue, confirm the delightful thought.

My mother is with us in Grosvenor-square, and her presence completes our happiness. My acquaintance with Sir Charles Royston is now ripened into the most

most tender friendship ; we are become inseparable. Lady Royston can only be equalled by my Emily. How perfect is the amity which unites them ! Lord Offory and his amiable Henrietta frequently grace our little circle. You would be charmed with Lady Offory, my dear friend, since in her the vivacity of the Parisian ladies is agreeably blended with the soft delicacy of my countrywomen.—Emily just now entered my apartment with an unusual glow of pleasure on her lovely face. Mrs. Elvin, her dear Mrs. Elvin, was this morning brought to bed of a daughter, and she is hastening to Berkley-square, to express her joy upon this interesting occasion. I will accompany her, and pay my congratulatory compliments to Mr. Elvin. This moment, my dear Emily, I attend you. Adieu !

E. F.

LET-

affectionate regards from your affectionate wife—W
—and I send this breakfast to you with
best love from her & myself a good evening.

LETTER CLXXXV.

Yours, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.
Is there any news from home at present?
Also Mrs ELVIN to Lady ESSEX.

AMONGST the numerous gratulations
which I have received upon my late
recovery, those from my dear Lady Essex
are by far the most pleasing.

The interest you take in my welfare,
and in that of my little Emily, fills my
heart with gratitude and affection. How
sincerely, then, do I rejoice in your ex-
pected arrival in London, when I shall be
allowed to return my personal acknow-
ledgements to you!

We—

200 LETTERS.

We—that is to say, my good man, his saucy wife, Sir Edward and Lady Fortescue, have been a week at a most delightful little retreat, which Sir Edward has lately purchased in Kent. Lady Fortescue is enchanted with it, and I already foresee that we shall frequently lose her from Grosvenor Square. I have laid an interdiction upon Sir Edward—he promises—but alas! in this respect he is not to be trusted.

Our little Emily is with us—no happiness without her, you know. I have found in her a great resemblance to Lady Fortescue, and the similarity renders her still dearer to me. Nay, do not smile at my folly—Sir Edward is of the same opinion, and, I believe, he has already given her many a tender caress upon that account.

Lady

L E T T E R S . 211

Lady Fortescue smiles at the supposition; she takes the pen, but will not deny the probability of it.

Adieu.

Our beloved Mrs. Elvin has given your Ladyship the best proof imaginable of her returning health, by the vivacity of her letter. Were she not close at my elbow, I would tell you that she is more lovely and saucy than ever—Our god-child is a most engaging little creature.

How highly am I indebted to your Ladyship, for the obliging share you take in my happiness! Sir Edward is the most amiable of mankind. The felicity of your Emily is complete.

O, my dear Lady Essex, how often does the disappointment of our wishes prove

prove a real blessing to us! — Could your friend have ever experienced that felicity from a connection with Sir Charles, which she now enjoys in her union with Sir Edward! — impossible! Distrust and anxiety had clouded her days with sorrow, and her tenderness would only have rendered the misfortune more severe.

Let not then the children of affliction presume to murmur at the decrees of Providence, but submit, with pious resignation, to the will of Heaven, convinced that the blessings they implore are withheld, either because they ought not to be granted, or in order to bestow upon them some greater good.

Edward enters the dressing room—
he reads my letter—he presses me with
rapture

rapture to his bosom. O, Madam, what a delightful moment! Hasten, hasten, I conjure you, to be a partaker of our felicity.

EMILY FORTESCUE.

F I N I S.

ERRATA to VOL. I.

Page 21, l. 3 from bottom, for *were*, read *was*—p. 24, l. 3 from top, for *run*, read *ran*—p. 45, l. 8 from top, for *now*, read *bew*—p. 46, l. 7 from top, dele *your*—p. 56, l. 6 from top, for *forward*, read *froward*—p. 62, l. 2 from top, for *O*, read *A*—p. 83, l. 10 from top, for *aimable*, read *amiable*—p. 92, l. 5 in letter 42, for *sorrow*, read *recent woe*—and in the next line, for *it*, read *sorrow*—p. 102, l. 13 from top, dele *ctually*—p. 104, l. 23 from top, for *greater a*, read *a great*.

ERRATA to VOL. II.

Page 8, l. 8 from top, for *a certain pledge*, read *certain pledges*—p. 11, l. 2 from bottom, for *dewoted* read *devoted*—p. 12, the inverted commas which are put at the 4th line, to be placed at the 7th, which is the beginning of the letter—p. 22, l. 7 from top, a comma after *long*—p. 48, l. 7 from top, for *was treated*, read *was ever treated*—p. 58, l. 5 from bottom, dele *each of us*—and in the next line, for *another*, read *each other*—p. 87, l. 8 from top, inverted commas at *where*, and at *amount*, the end of the sentence—p. 97, l. 2 from top, for *myself*, read *one's self*—p. 101, l. 2 from bottom, for *witeneſſ to*, read *witneſſ of*—p. 105, l. 4 from top, for *eſt*, read *lawiſh*—and in l. 6 of the same page, for *banished*, read *extirpated*—p. 114, l. 10 from top, for *Manly*, read *Stanly*.

